

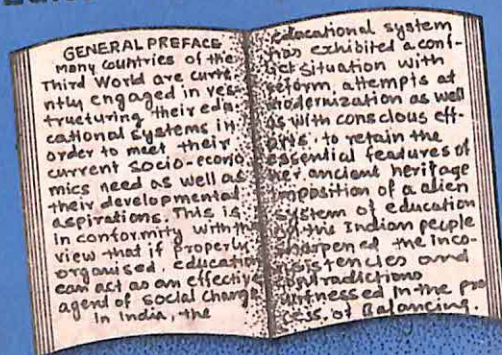
Studies in Educational Reform in India

Volume I

PERSPECTIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN INDIA

A.R. KAMAT

Editor P.R. PANCHAMUKHI



Himalaya Publishing House

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GENERAL PREFACE

Many countries of the Third World are currently engaged in restructuring their educational systems in order to meet their current socio-economic needs as well as their developmental aspirations. This is in conformity with the view that if properly organized, education can act as an effective agent of social change.

In India, the educational system has exhibited a conflict situation with reform attempts at modernization as well as with conscious efforts to retain the 'essential' features of her ancient heritage. Imposition of an alien system of education on the Indian people sharpened the inconsistencies and contradictions witnessed in the process of balancing these forces working in diverse directions. In such a situation, a need for reforms in education and the society was always felt and efforts were made to introduce them from time to time. Educational reform experiences in India over several decades of the past, present a very interesting story about the dynamics of the Indian society itself. The objective of the present series of *Studies in Educational Reform in India* is to delineate an analytical picture of the conception of a given reform, its formalization, implementation, functioning and finally its culmination in either its success or failure leading to the birth of another reform in some instances. The reforms introduced during the period from 1921 (i.e. after the introduction of Dyarchy) to 1980, and touching almost all the major aspects of education are subjected to incisive analysis in these studies. Basic questions are raised here about the potential of education as a change agent, the interdependence of the socio-economic structure and the reform process and the inevitable complementarity of the conflicts and continuity perceptions about educational change.

The series is divided into five volumes consisting of thirty-three case studies of different educational reforms. The first volume entitled *Perspectives for Educational Reform in India*, presents a socio-economic and political backdrop for the educational reforms attempted during the period 1921-80. The second volume, *Educational Reforms at Different Levels*, consists of twelve case studies of different types of reform tried in different regions of the country during this period. Fourteen case studies are included in the third volume *Reforms Towards Equality and Relevance*. The case studies in this volume discuss reforms to tackle various facets of educational inequality. Also, some case studies analyse the attempts to make education more meaningful and relevant to the needs of the society. The fourth volume in the series consists of the case studies relating to the Medium of Instruction and the Examination Reform at different levels. The fifth volume *Economics of Educational Finances*,

examines the crucial problems of educational finances which is the instrumentality of reform implementation.

Written by eminent scholars in the field, the contributions to this series can be considered to be pioneering attempts at analysing the dynamics of educational reforms in one of the leading Third World countries. These contributions not only provide insights into the working of a given reform in a particular socio-economic and political context but they also highlight the pre-conditions for the success and causes for the failure of the reform. In this sense, the studies would be of great interest to policy-makers in the Third World countries and also to researchers in the field of educational innovations.

This research project was conceived and formulated by the late Shri J.P. Naik. Till his passing away in 1981, he also guided the progress of this study. Alas, he does not live today to see the successful completion of the study which he so meticulously designed and guided. The Indian Institute of Education remembers with great respect, the contribution of this visionary in the field of social science research.

The project was sponsored and financed by the International Development Research Centre, Canada. The I.D.R.C. has also funded the publication of this series of studies. The Indian Institute of Education wishes to place on record its very sincere thanks to I.D.R.C. for this assistance. I wish to express my special gratitude to Dr. Kenneth King, the then Associate Director, I.D.R.C., for encouraging the Institute to initiate this project. My special thanks are also due to Dr. H. Dean Nielsen, Programme Officer, Social Sciences Division, I.D.R.C. whose sympathies and encouragement enabled the Institute to continue and complete the project despite the two tragic losses in 1981 and 1983 that the Institute had to suffer in the passing away of Shri J.P. Naik and Dr. A.R. Kamat. Originally, it was these two scholars who were to see the project through. Subsequently, the Institute placed the project under the guidance and care of a Committee of Direction headed by Prof. M.S. Gore, who was assisted by Prof. S. Shukla, Prof. C.T. Kurien, Dr. Chitra Naik and Prof. M.P. Rege. But for the organizational steps taken by the Committee of Direction, the project could not have progressed systematically. I express my sincere thanks to all the members of the Committee of Direction.

Apart from its thematic importance, this research project is unique in another sense. It has brought together a large number of eminent Indian social scientists and educationists to present their views on different educational reforms in India. I wish to place on record my special gratitude to the contributors to this series whose names have been listed on the next page. To my colleagues in the Indian Institute of Education, I express my appreciation and thanks for their help and cooperation at different stages of the Project. I particularly like to mention the help given by Dr. S.B. Gogate and Dr. M.H. Pimpalkhare.

The Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay deserve my special thanks for doing a neat job of bringing out this series within a short time. My

thanks are due to Shri D.P. Pandey, Himalaya Publishing House for this excellent production.

It is an interesting coincidence that all our efforts in the past five years have culminated into this publication on educational reforms at a time when the country is planning several reforms in the current educational system and when a political will appears to have risen to implement the reforms. It is hoped that this series of studies would be helpful in our national effort towards planning for a new educational system.

Indian Institute of
Education, Pune

P.R. Panchamukhi
Director.

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PREFACE TO VOLUME I

Education is only a small but a crucial sub-sector of the entire socio-economic and politico-cultural system of India. Though it is small, as evidenced by the low literacy rate and the small coverage of population under enrolments, it is crucial, because it wields a significant influence not only on itself but on the various sectors of the economy. The instruments of production largely rest with the small percentage of population which is literate and educated. The reins of political power also converge in the same small segment of population. The administrative controls are in the hands of the bureaucracy which essentially is the educated or literate elite.

The changes that are planned or that take place in this sub-sector of education may not necessarily be inconsistent with the goals of perpetuation of this elitist hold on the entire socio-economic and politico-cultural system of the country. A study of educational change, therefore, may present an account of the maneuvering by the interest groups to perpetuate their grip and hold on the system. This basically is the thrust of the conflict theories of social change, including educational change, developed in the Marxian paradigm.

The equilibrium-evolutionary paradigm, on the other hand, focuses its attention on the evolutionary process of educational change, which is considered to be an automatic and self-correcting mechanism. The structural functionalist approach assigns a crucial role to education for performing certain socio-economic functions. The planned educational change in this context is considered in the background of the automatic mechanism that is inbuilt into the system.

Can educational change in India during the sixty-year period from 1920 to 1980 be explained in terms of the conflict of interests or in terms of the evolutionary process inbuilt into the system? A.R. Kamat, the author of the volume I of the five volume series on **Educational Reforms**, presents an incisive analysis of the socio-economic and politico-cultural context for educational change during this period. The inter-disciplinary approach adopted by the author in explaining educational change is suggestive in that it highlights that any sociological phenomenon has to be examined in a broader cultural, political and socio-economic context. While the study analyses some of the major educational changes in this context, it serves to provide, in the main, the perspectives for understanding a number of educational reform attempts covered in detail in the remaining four volumes of the series on **Studies in Educational Reform in India**.

This presentation of the perspectives for educational reform in India is important, otherwise, one is tempted to draw unrealistic generalizations from the success or failure stories of the Indian educational reforms.

Since the final conclusions of the study were not written by the author before his sad demise, we have taken the liberty of reproducing an extract from his another study which also articulates basic thrust of his argument in the present study.

The late Dr. A.R. Kamat deserves grateful thanks from the academic community and the Indian Institute of Education for his eclectic, incisive and in-depth analysis of the Indian educational scene and also for suggesting a novel approach for understanding social change.

P.R. Panchamukhi,
Director,
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CHAPTER ONE

The Setting for Educational Reform: Politico-Economic Developments 1920-1947

We begin our social history of education in the pre-Independence period (1920-1947) with an historical outline of the politico-economic and social developments during the period.¹ It will facilitate this task if we first describe briefly the trends which were already visible during the World War I, mentioning the events from which they arose.

I. Emerging Trends

The years between 1914 when the First World War broke out and 1920 when the British imperial rulers tried to pacify Indian political opinion by launching the Montford reforms may be considered as a sort of an interregnum: It is a watershed or divider between the earlier phase of the freedom struggle, the phase of supplications, appeals, individual semi-legal and extra-legal agitations and revolutionary actions (by conspiratorial terrorist groups) on the one hand and the next phase of militant mass struggle beginning with the twenties, on the other.

By 1914 the British government had brought under control the earlier national discontent expressed in the movement for *Swadeshi*, and boycott of British goods, the demand for *Swaraj* (or self-government) and National Education, and the protest movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905. This was accomplished on the one hand by large-scale arrests of the revolutionaries and the Congress 'extremists', (e.g. the banishment of B.G. Tilak in 1908 to Burma for six years) and a subsequent reunification of Bengal in 1911.² This last effort of pacification, however, alienated the Muslim opinion; the Muslim League reacted to it the next year by adopting the creed of 'self-government', in a sense giving a notice that like the Congress their support and cooperation also should not be taken for granted.

When Britain declared itself at war against Germany in 1914 and involved India in it by a viceregal fiat it evoked overwhelming support for

Britain 'in its hour of peril' from almost all shades of public opinion in India. Apart from the Princes, loyalists like the moderates, and Muslim Leaguers, even Tilak, who had returned earlier in the year after completing his term of imprisonment at Mandalay, cabled his support to the British government. Gandhi who was then in England on his way to India from his long stay in South Africa exhorted the Indians in England to "think imperially" and proceeded to organize a Field Ambulance Corps, which venture, incidentally, he had to abandon because of the highhanded behaviour of the British counterpart.³

Indian soldiers were drafted to fight alongside the British in several theatres of the war. Within a few weeks of the declaration of the war some 28,000 of them were sent to France to save the collapsing Anglo-French resistance at the Franco-German border. Late in 1915 a similar large contingent was despatched to the Persian Gulf to fight against Turkey in a campaign which ended in a veritable disaster due to inept, inefficient handling of supplies by the British officers in the military supply administration. Thousands of Indian soldiers died for want of essential provisions like medicines, food, shoes and even ammunition. Again, some thirty thousand Indian troops were in Egypt to guard the Suez Canal and to 'defend' Egypt against Turkey. (The objective of the Anglo-French imperialists in the last-mentioned two campaigns was to dismember the Turkish empire and carve out their spheres of influence during and after the war.⁴) Thus, about a hundred and twenty thousand Indian soldiers participated in fighting abroad and could watch and experience the behaviour of the British officers and soldiers, their strengths and weaknesses, and absorbed the valuable lessons from these encounters.

Inevitably the War and India's forced entry in it also significantly affected Indian economy with disruption of trade, the resulting scarcity of many common commodities and a rapid price-rise. On the other hand Indian capital which, due to the British policy of restriction on industries, was mainly in evidence in trade and commerce prospered in a considerable measure and immediately after the war Indian capitalists started establishing industrial enterprises. While, before the war there were only a few entrepreneurs and none of them of much significance except the Tatas with their steel works at Jamshedpur in Bihar and some textile mill-owners in Bombay and elsewhere, by 1920-21 there had crystallized a fairly strong class of Indian capitalists.⁵ They had started taking interest in the national movement and seeking for a decisive influence on its policies.

In spite of the protestations of most political leaders of loyal support to the British, as the war prolonged, the political situation in India began to change because it soon became evident that the post-war world would be

vastly different. Tilak made efforts to unify the National Congress, and when rebuffed by the Moderates for enlivening the political scene, he started the 'Home-Rule' Movement in collaboration with and parallel to the similar effort of Annie Besant. After the demise of the two liberal stalwarts, Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, in 1915-16, the Moderates and the Extremists succeeded in composing their differences and working unitedly in the National Congress. Moreover, with the help of Jinnah, whose political thinking was till then largely influenced by Naoroji and Gokhale, and of other leaders of the Muslim League, Tilak took the bold initiative for forging a Congress-League political understanding. This resulted in 1916 in the famous Lucknow Pact. With this agreement the Congress did concede a special status for Muslims in the form of separate electorates and weighted representation in the legislative bodies.⁶ All these provisions were for assuring this important minority community that their interests and security will be safeguarded in the future set up. Thus the Lucknow Pact brought together Tilak and the Moderates, and the Congress and the Muslim League, that is, the main political contenders. More importantly it enabled the Indian national movement to formulate a united demand for wide-ranging self-government like that in the Dominions after the end of the War and for an immediate declaration to that effect, on the part of the British government. Jinnah who played an important role in forging the Lucknow agreement came to be described as the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity!

Gandhi had used his own philosophy and techniques of *Satyagraha* and non-violent resistance in his struggle for the recognition of the rights of Indians in South Africa for over two decades and achieved notable success in his efforts. He returned to India for good in 1915. He was closely observing the Indian situation and by 1917 had already tried to practise his methods in the struggle of the plantation labour at Champaran in Bihar, peasant struggle in Kheda district in Gujarat and the textile labour dispute at Ahmedabad. Apparently these small-scale mass struggles were precursors of the larger mass movement to come. They posed a somewhat inscrutable challenge both to the British rulers in India and to the hitherto established Indian political leadership of different hues in the country

The earlier, relatively mild, political activities of the established political leadership should not be interpreted as though the entire political scene was placid and quiet all these years. Even when there were loud, public protestations of loyalty and support to the War and the war effort, the extremist revolutionaries were busy trying to establish connections with Germany and other countries hostile to Britain and its allies.⁷ Moreover, the Indian political leadership was insistently asking the British rulers to spell out their post-War aims towards India and to respond positively to

their demand for *Swaraj*. The 'home-rule' activities of Tilak and Besant had already attracted the usual repressive response from the government in the form of bans and restrictions. Now the Lucknow Pact posed a new challenge in this respect. Even more significantly there were signs of the broad masses entering as a new powerful factor in Indian politics. Under the pressure of many wartime hardships, acute scarcities of such vital necessities like food, and ever-rising prices, the popular discontent was piling up. In the midst of these miseries, towards the end of the war (1918-1919), came the massive influenza epidemic, taking a toll of over 12 to 14 million lives,⁸ almost four per cent of the population of about 300 to 305 million. The hundred thousand peasant lads who fought alongside the British in the war in distant lands returned to India with a new consciousness gathered in their actual experiences. One could feel the resulting ground-swell in the public temper caused by the accumulation of all these happenings.

Added to all these developments internal to India were world-shaking events exploding abroad towards and after the end of the War. The old, mighty empires — Prussian, Austro-Hungarian, Turkish and Russian — were falling apart, bringing about far-reaching changes in the world configuration and alignment of forces. The Soviet Socialist revolution of 1917 added an altogether new dimension bringing new hopes and inspiration to forces fighting for national and social liberation. Working-class parties, the socialist and communist parties in Europe and elsewhere, acquired new strengths; the rise of a strong Labour Party in Britain was looked upon as a hopeful development for the freedom struggle in India. President Wilson's advocacy of the right of self-determination to the (European) nations liberated from the yoke of the (defeated) empires indirectly vindicated the Indian demand for self-government, for 'home-rule'. Moreover, the breakup of the Turkish Empire along with the destruction of the Caliphate deeply stirred the religious feelings of the Indian Muslims. From their resentment against the British rose the Khilafat movement of Indian Muslims which allied itself with the mainstream of the national movement.

The developments of the later War years—the home-rule movement, the Lucknow Pact of 1916, the demand for self-government, and the implied Muslim support for this demand, etc.—and the growing popular impatience and unrest thus confronted the British government with an altogether new situation. How did it respond? The response was two-fold. The newly appointed Secretary of State for India, Montague announced in August 1917 that the post-war policy of the British government was "that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an in-

tegral part of the British Empire".⁹ There was great disappointment and resentment among the Indian political leadership at this niggling, vague gesture with no commitment about immediate political advance. But they did not reject it outright and decided to wait for the actual scheme of the reforms.

At the same time the Government of India reverted to the policy of naked repression, its final expression being the enactment of Rowlatt bills of 1919, indeed, unprecedented measures for peace-time use. The post-War awakening and struggles during 1918 onwards—strikes of industrial workers for their pent-up demands, the formation of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), struggles of peasants due to further pauperization—all these had thus evoked an over-reactive repressive policy on the part of the government. Its most aggressive and ugly manifestation was the Jalianwalla Bag massacre at Amritsar in which hundreds — one estimate puts it over a thousand—of peaceful participants in a meeting to protest against Rowlatt Acts were shot down by that arrogant madman of a general, R.E.H. Dyer.¹⁰ Although the government tried to suppress and/or underplay the news the incident soon became public knowledge and sent a wave of anger and horror throughout the country. What was most despicable and revolting was the unashamed justification and ex-oration of Dyer, and even plaudits showered on him by the Tory press in England. Moreover, this was followed by Martial law in Punjab, a veritable reign of terror which set the whole country ablaze. Although the Montague declaration and the actual severe repression to suppress the people's movement apparently seemed contradictory and puzzling they were two faces of the same imperial policy of incipient inducement in words and the mailed fist of power and terror in actual action.

It was this surcharged atmosphere of the post-war period, particularly the two years 1918-1920, that shaped the developments of the coming twenties. The Montford Reforms were enacted towards the end of 1919 and although they were a complete travesty of what was expected by Indian political leaders they did not greet them with an entirely negative response. They did not reject them out of hand. The Moderates (or Liberals), sensing the coming phase of mass struggle, broke away from the Congress to found their own organization, the National Liberal Federation, and decided to work the reforms. Tilak protested against the niggardly nature of the reforms but he (and, more so, his followers) were wanting to adopt towards them (what they called) a policy of 'responsive cooperation'. But the national mood had undergone a sea change as a result of the negative and terrorising policy of the Government and was incensed at the Punjab atrocities. The Amritsar Session of the Congress held in December 1919 under the presidentship of Motilal Nehru reflected this all-pervading

national gloom and resentment. The war period and the change in the international scene had raised high the hopes of millions of politicised Indians only to find them unceremonially dashed to the ground by the disappointing offer of the Montford Reforms and the brutal repression unleashed on political activities. Tilak died in August 1920 and the stage was set for the massive entry of Mahatma Gandhi in the political arena to lead the ensuing struggle with his characteristic techniques of *Satyagraha* and *Non-Cooperation*. The Calcutta Special Congress set its seal on his leadership.

This review will be incomplete without noticing other salient trends of the period which were already manifesting themselves. The rise of an organized trade union movement along with its consolidation into an all-India body in 1920 is already mentioned. We should also note a new wave of peasant struggles against feudal land relations, bonded labour in plantations, extortionate moneylending and the heavy burden of land revenue.

Different segments of society had already started striving for establishing their self-identity and their place in the socio-economic and socio-political set up of tomorrow. The largest minority, the Muslims, have already been mentioned. The middle social strata, rural, land-based caste groups were coming up with their social and political organizations like the non-Brahman movements of Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and other Southern States. The outcastes — the untouchables — were acquiring a new consciousness and a small educated 'elite' from amongst them had already made its appearance on the socio-political horizon demanding for them a place under the Sun.

In the cultural sphere also new stirrings could be observed. For instance, linguistic regions, the many distinct nationalities in India, were beginning to assert their distinctive cultural identities claiming a rightful place for their languages and distinctive cultures. The development and use of regional languages was also a political need of the time because the message of the new political and social awakening could be taken to the broad masses only through using them, by developing them. While in literature it was a transitional period from the neo-classical phase to the modern phase expressing the hopes and aspirations of the rising middle class, it was also a change-over from the newspapers and viewspapers of the old style to the use of that medium not only for news and views but also for mass awakening.

II. Mighty Mass Struggle

The developments of the pre-Independence period, 1920-1947 have to be viewed mainly in the context of the developing mass struggle for national liberation spearheaded by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi and the responses to it of the British rulers and also of the non-Congress segments in the country. This liberation struggle passed through three successive waves, each of increasing extent and rising militancy, in the three successive decades. There was the Non-Cooperation Movement of the early twenties, the Civil Disobedience Movement of the early thirties, and finally the Quit-India revolt of 1942 with a general anti-imperialist outburst after World War II culminating in the Naval uprising of 1946. This last campaign led to the withdrawal of the British rulers which, in 1947, partitioned the country and transferred power to the two independent States of India and Pakistan.

We have already described in the last section the emerging trends in Indian politics after World War I, including mass unrest, which were kind of precursors to the happenings in the future. To placate the Indian political leadership which was insistently demanding immediate grant of Home Rule — meaning in effect a political status almost equivalent to that of the self-governing Dominions in the British empire—the British offered (and enacted) the Montford Reforms Act in December 1919. Essentially it meant a larger complement of elected members in the Central and Provincial legislatures, a wider franchise and separate electorates (General, that is, non-Muslims, Muslims and some other specified groups), the system called 'Dyarchy' in the Provinces with a partial devolution of responsibility to elected Indian Ministers in the form of 'transferred' departments (of such innocuous subjects like education, excise, health, etc.) retaining the more important ones like home and finance as 'reserved' departments in the hands of the Governor and the British bureaucrats. Also under the Act the Central executive was 'enlarged' and made 'more representative' though all executive powers were kept firmly in the hands of the Viceroy and his minions in the Executive Council.¹¹

By the end of 1919 one could discern several portentous changes in the Indian political situation: Post-war awakening and discontent arising out of the rapidly deteriorating economic conditions: seething mass political resentment against the British policy of repression — Rowlatt Acts, the Amritsar massacre and use of terror under the Marshal Law in Punjab; the Khilafat movement of Indian Muslims protesting against the liquidation of the seat of their religion in Turkey and demanding its restoration; the widespread sympathy for this (religious) movement of the Muslims on the part of Indian National Congress in general and of Gandhiji in par-

national gloom and resentment. The war period and the change in the international scene had raised high the hopes of millions of politicised Indians only to find them unceremonially dashed to the ground by the disappointing offer of the Montford Reforms and the brutal repression unleashed on political activities. Tilak died in August 1920 and the stage was set for the massive entry of Mahatma Gandhi in the political arena to lead the ensuing struggle with his characteristic techniques of *Satyagraha* and *Non-Cooperation*. The Calcutta Special Congress set its seal on his leadership.

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II. Mighty Mass Struggle

The developments of the pre-Independence period, 1920-1947 have to be viewed mainly in the context of the developing mass struggle for national liberation spearheaded by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi and the responses to it of the British rulers and also of the non-Congress segments in the country. This liberation struggle passed through three successive waves, each of increasing extent and rising militancy, in the three successive decades. There was the Non-Cooperation Movement of the early twenties, the Civil Disobedience Movement of the early thirties, and finally the Quit-India revolt of 1942 with a general anti-imperialist outburst after World War II culminating in the Naval uprising of 1946. This last campaign led to the withdrawal of the British rulers which, in 1947, partitioned the country and transferred power to the two independent States of India and Pakistan.

We have already described in the last section the emerging trends in Indian politics after World War I, including mass unrest, which were kind of precursors to the happenings in the future. To placate the Indian political leadership which was insistently demanding immediate grant of Home Rule — meaning in effect a political status almost equivalent to that of the self-governing Dominions in the British empire—the British offered (and enacted) the Montford Reforms Act in December 1919. Essentially it meant a larger complement of elected members in the Central and Provincial legislatures, a wider franchise and separate electorates (General, that is, non-Muslims, Muslims and some other specified groups), the system called 'Dyarchy' in the Provinces with a partial devolution of responsibility to elected Indian Ministers in the form of 'transferred' departments (of such innocuous subjects like education, excise, health, etc.) retaining the more important ones like home and finance as 'reserved' departments in the hands of the Governor and the British bureaucrats. Also under the Act the Central executive was 'enlarged' and made 'more representative' though all executive powers were kept firmly in the hands of the Viceroy and his minions in the Executive Council.¹¹

By the end of 1919 one could discern several portentous changes in the Indian political situation: Post-war awakening and discontent arising out of the rapidly deteriorating economic conditions: seething mass political resentment against the British policy of repression — Rowlatt Acts, the Amritsar massacre and use of terror under the Marshal Law in Punjab; the Khilafat movement of Indian Muslims protesting against the liquidation of the seat of their religion in Turkey and demanding its restoration; the widespread sympathy for this (religious) movement of the Muslims on the part of Indian National Congress in general and of Gandhiji in par-

ticular which paved the way for the first time for forging a joint front against the British rulers; and last but not the least, Gandhi who had already used his political techniques of *Satyagraha* and passive resistance in partial struggles was slowly moving towards the centre of Indian politics.

It was amidst this rapidly changing situation that the paltry Montford Reforms — whose contents are spelt out above — were enacted as a palliative against the gathering storm. The general political reaction in India was one of acute disappointment and bitter resentment. The National Congress dubbed them as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing,"¹² and responded to it with a counter-demand for immediate grant of "full responsible government in accordance with the principle of self-determination".¹³ Curiously enough, in spite of the atrocities of the Jalian-walla Bagh episode and elsewhere in Punjab (and all over India) it was Gandhi who persuaded the Congress to hasten slowly arguing that the Reforms were "an earnest of the British people to do justice to India" and that instead of 'carping criticism' their "duty therefore is... to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success."¹⁴ The Liberals (or Moderates) in the Congress sensing the growing militancy of the organisation had parted company in 1918 on the issue of the acceptance of the Montford Reforms. Because of this and the changing mood of Indian politics, the Amritsar Congress (of December 1919) decided to transform the National Congress from its character so far, of the annual reunion of a club, into a standing deliberative body outlining the national policies from time to time and controlling and directing their implementation.¹⁵ Significantly enough this task was entrusted to Gandhi, thus anticipating, and in a sense putting a stamp of approval on, his overall leadership in the future. Incidentally one significant organizational change in the Congress effected at this stage was to have regional committees organized mostly on linguistic basis which facilitated its advance as a mass organization and anticipated the linguistic territorial reorganization in the independent India to come. Also its objective was now clearly mentioned as "attainment of *Swaraj* by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means".¹⁶ After Tilak's death in 1920 the political stage was clear for Gandhi to occupy the central position for heading the political struggle for freedom.

While the political leadership was deliberating over their final response to the Montford Reforms the mass unrest, in addition to political resentment against the Punjab outrages, was taking the form of economic struggles against the acute war-time and post-war scarcities and hardships. For instance, in the brief period of the first half of 1920 there were two hundred strikes in India involving a million workers. The All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) held its first session in October 1920 under the chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai, thus giving for the first time an organized all-

India form to the working-class movement.¹⁷ It is under these circumstances that Gandhi gave his call for the non-cooperation movement adopting *Satyagraha* (persistence with truth) and non-violence (*Ahimsa*) as its cardinal principles. This programme was accepted and ratified at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur held in December 1920. It was accompanied with an electrifying slogan of 'Swaraj within a year'!

What was the programme of this 'non-violent non-cooperation'? Briefly, it was a programme of 'progressive intensification of non-violent non-cooperation' and was based on Congress-Khilafat alliance. The following successive stages were visualised: renunciation of honours and titles bestowed by the British government and refusal to invitations for official functions; four-fold boycott, of law courts by lawyers, of schools and colleges (together with the establishment of national education institutions), of elections to the legislatures under the Montford reforms, of British goods and cloth (together with encouragement to *Swadeshi* and *Khaddar*), prohibition of drinking liquor, etc., with a possible ultimate escalation to non-payment of taxes, that is, of land revenue.¹⁸ The political atmosphere was already so surcharged that the programme generated a tremendous upheaval, the peak period being the middle of 1921 by which most of the leaders except Gandhi were imprisoned. There were unprecedented scenes of Hindu-Muslim fraternization and of huge popular demonstrations, processions, strikes and *hartals*. People observed a complete boycott all over the country at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales in December 1921. There were widespread local revolts like the Moplah revolt which unfortunately assumed a communal character and the government terror to suppress them.

Taken aback by this unprecedented popular response, the government unleashed an equally unprecedented terror — arrests, beatings, firings. By January 1922, the government had jailed more than 30,000 civil resisters.¹⁹ To summarize the results of the campaign: From August 1920 to 6th February 1922 (when the campaign was withdrawn) it was going from strength to strength; the boycott of elections was partially effective in the sense that although the non-Congress elements entered the legislatures the Congress abstention showed up their unrepresentative character; the boycott of schools and colleges, again, was quite effective to start with — some 12 to 13 per cent of college students and 3 to 4 per cent of school students left their institutions.²⁰ A small but significant number of institutions of 'national education' was started, the most prominent amongst them being Tilak Vidyapeeth at Pune, Gujarat Vidyapeeth at Ahmedabad, Kashi Vidyapeeth and Jamia Millia Islamia. Boycott of law courts was much less successful except for the cessation of practice by some prominent legal luminaries of all-India reputation like C.R. Das and

Motilal Nehru. Boycott of British goods (and particularly of fine cloth) was effective and *Khaddar* became a sort of a national patriotic uniform. But all these — except hand-spinning and weaving which took the Congress message to the small towns and rural areas — were, in a sense programmes for the middle, upper or educated classes and were bound to diminish in intensity as months went by. And significantly enough there was no national programme outlined for the actions of the working class or of peasants against the feudal interests.

Even so, as mentioned above, the campaign had acquired a momentum of its own and youthful Congress volunteers were looking forward to the no-tax campaign for which Gandhi had chosen Bardoli as his field of 'experiment'. Before it could be launched however, a public demonstration came into conflict with the police at Chauri Chaura, a small town in Gorakhpur district now in UP, where the demonstrators set fire to a police *thana* where the unpopular village constabulary had taken refuge; and some policemen were burnt to death in the fire. Gandhi was alarmed at the violence involved in the incident and its implication for the future character of the movement. He hastened to stop not only the Bardoli no-tax struggle but also withdrew later the entire non-cooperation campaign.²¹ This sudden stoppage of the battle in the midstream caused considerable confusion and profound demoralization among the rank and file workers as well as some of the tallest leaders like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Lajpat Rai, then in prison.²² Taking this opportunity the government suddenly swooped down to arrest Gandhi, jailed him to a six-year sentence and proceeded to suppress the movement ruthlessly. This was virtually the beginning of the end of the struggle although it formally lingered on till after Gandhi was released because of a serious illness in 1924, when it was officially withdrawn by him. After his release (and even before) Gandhi emphasized and exhorted his followers to work for the 'constructive programme' — production and popularization of *Khaddar*, removal of untouchability and the constructive work in the rural areas.

In spite of Gandhi's sudden withdrawal of the struggle and the consequent bafflement and the (temporary) political paralysis it induced the non-cooperation movement had accomplished many achievements: the national movement had assumed a militancy and a mass character; there was considerable shedding of the fear of the mighty British rule; and there arose in India an alternative centre of allegiance which could grow and expand in the future. In spite of the catching, unrealistic slogan of '*Swaraj* within a year', Gandhi had perhaps aimed at only these limited objectives. Probably he did not wish to build up an all-out confrontation with the British rulers because that would have endangered the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power through a more or less mutually accommodative compromise leaving intact

the entire administrative machine in its working condition for the future Indian rulers. Moreover, such a struggle would have meant a possible mortal blow to the existing socio-economic structure, particularly the agrarian system and the unequal social stratification.²³

In the meanwhile the political **scene** had been undergoing profound changes. First, the demoralization following the withdrawal of the movement encouraged the constitutionalists in the Congress to take to the politics of Council-entry. They founded the Swaraj party, fought the next elections in order to take the 'obstructionist policy' right into the legislative bodies themselves! Their effort did succeed in mustering a sizable strength in these bodies. Gandhi (and his 'no-changer' followers) accepted the inevitable; the Congress sanctioned the policy of 'constitutional obstruction'. Although the Swarajists were able parliamentarians this move soon led their politics into a blind alley; further demoralization started setting in, which resulted in some of them taking to the slippery path of abject cooperation with the government. And this went on until the clouds of a further political storm began to gather on the political horizon in the form of mass politico-economic discontent on the one hand and a frustrating stalemate in the constitutionalist politics of the Swaraj party on the other. A significant development of this period was the open interest which the Indian bourgeoisie started displaying in the National Congress, and its politics and programmes. The boycott of British goods and the espousal of their cause by the Swarajist Congressites in the legislatures had considerably benefited them and they were now prepared to provide the national (meaning the Congress) movement with financial sinews which enabled them to exercise considerable direct or indirect, influence over its policies and actions.

Second, following the collapse of the non-cooperation movement the sectarian interests in Indian politics began raising their heads to assert their separate claims and demands. For Muslims there was in addition the frustration at the failure of the Khilafat movement because the modern outlook adopted by Turkey under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk in fact meant the abolition of the religious seat of the Caliphate thus removing the basis of the Khilafat agitation altogether.²⁴ In this atmosphere of despondency communal distrust increased manifesting in large-scale riots at various places, inflicting serious damage on national unity and national struggle for freedom. In a country of subcontinental dimensions, with seasoned imperialist rulers always ready to exploit dissensions and differences between different sections of society, the national movement should have been equally alert to these issues, particularly that of the Muslim minority with its sizable strength of a quarter of the population, its concentration in quite a few large regions and its historical past of princely

and kingly rule. Another social section which aroused distrust towards the national mainstream was the depressed (the untouchables) classes which formed almost one-sixth of the population. In the result the separatist trends and organizations of Muslims and Hindus, and later also of the depressed classes gathered substantial strength in opposition to the National Congress.

While the Muslims feared that they would be submerged by the overall Hindu majority in this country of subcontinental dimensions the Hindu communalists reacted to this distrust with the slogans of consolidation of the Hindus against the 'aggressive' Muslim leadership aided and supported by the British rulers. Looking back, it is clear that tagging purely religious issues like the Khilafat grievances, although arising from the genuine religious discontent of the Muslims, with the struggle for national freedom, was perhaps an unwise step and it did not prove conducive to the latter in the long run. Equally unhelpful and backward-looking was the use of the largely Hindu idiom (e.g., *Satyagraha*, *Ahimsa*, etc.). Although it was useful for rousing the (Hindu middle class) majority in the short run, it was also responsible for creating a sort of status distance in building up a secular movement of national freedom. Then on, the national movement, in fact, was not able to bring the majority of the politically awakened Muslims under its banner. It was the Muslim League which gradually emerged as the rallying point around which they collected thus enabling it to gather political strength in the name of a separate self-identity.

The broad national awakening was also responsible for kindling a separate self-identity among the depressed classes, particularly among the small educated elite leading them. In spite of Gandhi's active efforts to take up their cause the national movement as a whole, with its traditional orthodoxy and slow-moving, condescending attitude, was not able to attract and retain them in substantial strength in its fold. In Maharashtra, for instance, Ambedkar led their fight against social and economic injustice to build their own self-identity, self-respect and an organization as an expression of these and made a bid for separate electorates and reservations.

As mentioned before (in Section I) the Russian revolution of 1917, the rise and advance of socialist and communist movements of Europe and elsewhere, and that of the British Labour Party in particular, (including the Great Strike in the UK later in 1926) did have an impact on the radical elements in the national movement. The earliest efforts in this direction were those of M.N. Roy, initially from abroad and also later in India and of S.A. Dange and Muzzafar Ahmad in India. By 1924 there was already a nucleus of the Communist Party (the Workers and Peasants Party); and the government promptly tried to nip it by launching the Kanpur Con-

spiracy Case. But the tide of radical ideas could not be stemmed so easily as it also affected the young activists in the Congress itself. By 1928 the Youth League had organized the radical youth inside and outside the Congress, and many amongst them professed a socialist, leftward outlook. The communists had in the meantime acquired considerable influence in the trade union movement in Bombay and elsewhere and this time the government struck at them even harder when it indiscriminately arrested more than thirty activists from all parts of India under an omnibus charge of 'conspiracy', better known as the Meerut Conspiracy Case. It dragged on for many years, almost till 1934. This government offensive did seriously affect adversely the functioning of the left-led TU movement for some time.²⁵ In the meanwhile Jawaharlal Nehru who had become a leading personality in the Congress was himself voicing socialist (and even communist-sounding) thoughts and ideas. Moreover, eventually there had already come into existence the Congress Socialist section as a functioning ginger group in the National Congress itself.

This brief account of the radical thought and activity in the general mainstream of anti-imperialist struggle cannot be complete without mentioning the terrorist groups of various hues and views. The frustration over the abrupt withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement in 1924 and the sterile Council politics thereafter revived this trend in a significant manner. It was in a sense a continuation of such older groups since the national struggle of 1905-06, through the First World War. After the war the terrorist movement became again active in the mid-twenties and later. Its two most celebrated outbursts were the Chitagaon Armoury Raid by the Bengal group and the actions of Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and their comrades towards the end of the decade. The new groups had a different outlook than that of the terrorists of the older period. It is well known that while Bhagat Singh and some of his associates had already accepted the Marxist ideas for basic changes in Indian society, a number of those in Bengal, and particularly those involved in the Chitagaon Raid, later joined the Communist Party.

We have already mentioned the emergence of the Muslim League and the rise of the depressed classes'—(the untouchables)—protest movement under the assertive leadership of Ambedkar. The stalemate in national politics and communal, that is, the Hindu-Muslim tensions strengthened the Hindu communal groups and their organization, the Hindu Maha Sabha, which functioned separately but sometimes also in association with the Congress movement, and its leadership. The late twenties also witnessed the rise of a more militant Hindu communal organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), ostensibly professing itself as a non-political organization for the cultural revival of the

Hindus. But its main thrust was against the Indian Muslims and not against the British rule and they professed an avowedly backward-looking and authoritarian ideology reflected in their unabashed admiration for the Fascist and Nazi leaders of Europe.

Returning to the main stream of the national movement, after the doldrums of the frustrating politics of Council-entry of the Swarajists on the one hand, and with Gandhi ploughing his furrow of spinning, khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability on the other, new forces were arising in and outside the Congress and were becoming restive at its uninspiring and insipid activities. At the same time there were insistent demands for Responsible Government and Round Table Conference for framing the Constitution (to be enacted by the British Parliament) on the part of the Swarajists and others who shared their approach to political strategy. The Government responded, and using the statutory requirement mentioned in the Montford Reforms, the British Government appointed a Commission (better known as Simon Commission after the name of its chairman) in 1927, for reviewing the constitutional progress under the Reforms Act of the 1919. But the all-white composition of the Commission triggered off a tremendous wave of resentment and protest throughout the country. Most parties including the Congress roundly denounced it and refused to cooperate with it. When the Commission arrived in India in 1928 wherever it went it faced militant mass demonstrations, hartals and strikes, with resounding cries of "Simon, go back". The country was evidently entering another period of militant mass struggle for freedom, more widespread and more militant than the earlier Non-Cooperation Movement.

III. New Upsurge and Upheaval

The massive protest against the Simon Commission in 1927-28 marks a new stage in the national struggle which culminated into the Civil Disobedience (CD) movement of 1930-1932 and of which the politico-economic forewarnings were already in evidence. We have already mentioned the ineffective politics of the Swarajists and the resulting discontent among the younger generation in the national movement; also the deteriorated situation in Hindu-Muslim relations, aided and abetted by the British rulers and the reactionary non-secular political elements in the two communities, the Calcutta riots of the summer of 1926 being one of its worst manifestations. While "constructive workers" (reformers) influenced by Gandhi were trying to ameliorate the social and economic plight of untouchables (and also of tribals) their efforts were proving extremely inadequate. A critically vocal leadership had started to emerge from the ranks of these communities.

As against these syndromes of political stalemate and stagnation there were also emerging definite signs of a new upsurge and upheaval. "The signs of the coming stormy weather began to appear in 1927. In both the agricultural and industrial sectors distress was increasing."²⁶ The large majority of the agricultural population, pauperized and immiserised, was in the throes of further acute distress because of a rapid fall in the price of agricultural commodities. The discontent among the industrial workers was also increasing, manifesting itself in a colossal strike movement: while 1.1 million mandays were lost in 1926, in 1927-28 the loss doubled and in 1928 31.6 million mandays were lost.²⁷ There were long-drawn out strikes in Tata Iron and Steel Works, jute mills in Bengal, among railway workers in East and South India, etc., the textile workers in Bombay fought for their demands for almost six months under the leadership of the *Girni Kamgar* (or Red Flag) Union. Students and youth were getting restless and they organized themselves under Youth Leagues. The spread of education in the twenties, the growth of the language press disseminating a new political consciousness, and memories of the exhilarating experience of the non-cooperation struggle also greatly contributed to this new wave of awakening.

It is necessary to mention two other significant developments. In the earlier period Indian industry and trade had obtained many partial concessions under the 'constitutional' attacks of the Swarajists and more so in order to wean them away from the 'extra-legal' non-cooperation movement. From 1927 the government started a reversal of this policy to re-establish its complete economic domination through measures like changing the rupee ratio adversely, prescribing preferential rates for British steel and other goods, etc.²⁸ The government's new economic offensive alienated the Indian bourgeoisie who had hoped for a compromise with the British capital but were now well-disposed towards a new mass movement under the Congress leadership with which they had already established closer links of policy and patronage.

At the same time new leftward trends were manifesting themselves within and outside the National Congress. The latter—the Communist Party of India with its trade union activities, and other left-oriented groups like those of Bhagat Singh and his comrades and the Bengal group—are mentioned in the last section. In the Congress itself emerged a left-oriented section which was strengthened by the expression of socialist thought by Jawaharlal Nehru himself (who had visited Europe and even the USSR in 1927) and by Subhash Bose. These left radical groups brought to the fore on the Congress platform (and even otherwise) the question of the content of the demand of self-government, including the controversy over

'complete independence' (*Purna Swaraj*) versus Dominion Status. Actually a resolution for complete independence, which was always opposed till then by the Congress leadership including Gandhi, was passed unanimously (in Gandhi's absence) at the Madras Session of the Congress in 1927!²⁹

It is against this rising tide of awakening that one has to view the popular outburst against Simon Commission mentioned in the last section. The National Congress boycotted the Commission and wherever it went there were huge mass demonstrations against it. While this was the response of the rank and file which was getting impatient with the moderate leadership in the Congress, an All-Parties Conference was convened in February 1928, under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to forge a draft constitution for India. They drafted (what came to be called) the Nehru-Committee Report proposing responsible government within the Empire—in other words it was willing to settle for the Dominion status. But these unity efforts broke down, unfortunately, on the question of Muslim representation, particularly whether it should be one-third in the Central Legislature or in proportion to its population (which would be about 25 per cent or thereabout)—the *Hindu Maha Sabha* leaders vehemently opposing the one-third proposal.³⁰

The hectic events of 1928 persuaded Gandhi to return once more to active politics in the Congress. Although the Nehru Report had proved a failure to bridge the communal differences its scheme of responsible government within the Empire provided Gandhi a basis for negotiations with the Viceroy. The Calcutta Congress in December 1928 accepted, under Gandhi's influence, the Report and gave a year's notice to concede the demand of self-government failing which, it warned the Congress would be compelled to start its next campaign of mass struggle. The Calcutta session also witnessed the explosive character of the political situation in that a demonstration of some 50,000 workers captured the Congress pandal for two hours with slogans for 'complete independence' and for the 'independent Socialist Republic of India.'³¹

The government's response to the developing situation was, as usual, two-fold: It armed itself with repressive powers in the form of Public Safety Bill of 1928, defeated in the Assembly, but issued as an ordinance, and the Trade Disputes Act aimed at the workers' movement. On the other hand to placate the moderate leadership a statement was issued on the 31st October 1928 announcing the decision to convene a Round Table Conference (RTC) as early as possible to deliberate over the future constitution. The statement asserted, "(It) is implicit in the (Montague) declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as therein con-

templated, is the attainment of Dominion Status.”³² This was quickly grasped by the moderate leaders—within and without the Congress—who issued the Delhi Manifesto welcoming the statement but stipulated that the RTC should proceed to deliberate on the basis of Dominion status for India. While the Delhi Manifesto was seen by the imperial rulers as a sign of weakening, the Congress leadership which had supported it, found to their chagrin in their talks with the Viceroy that he gave no such commitment.

Therefore, when the Congress met at Lahore in December 1929, under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru, the year of grace was already over and the session declared its objective as “Complete Independence” and decided to unleash a campaign of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes under the leadership of Gandhi.³³ India’s tricolor was unfurled amidst deafening slogans of *Inquilab Zindabad* (“Long live the revolution”) at the stroke of midnight marking the end of the third decade.³⁴ This was followed by celebrating Independence Day on the 26th January 1930 (which is observed as Republic Day since 1950) when lakhs of people all over the country took the solemn pledge, declaring that “The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually.” They pledged themselves to abolish this bondage. Lahore Congress was indeed a great step forward in that it was not only a pledge for complete severance from the Empire but also implied socio-structural changes in the independent India to come.

True to his style Gandhi first made a compromise move by putting forward his ‘eleven-points’ demand—which were far short of ‘complete independence’—comprising various reforms for immediate acceptance by the government failing which he declared he would initiate the campaign of ‘civil disobedience’—meaning breaking unjust laws by the *satyagrahis* (civil resisters) observing strict Non-Violence. As is well known his stress on non-violence was to combat “the organised violence force of the British rule, as well as the unorganised violence force of the growing party of violence”.³⁵ It is clear the latter meant the Indian revolutionaries who, if they gained in strength and influence, would make it impossible to strike a compromise and a peaceful transfer of power.³⁶

As a brilliant tactician Gandhi chose the issue of salt tax, picking or preparation of salt without paying tax being the first programme under the civil disobedience (CD) movement. For this purpose he started on March 12, 1930, his famous Dandi march (or *yatra*, that is, pilgrimage) leading on foot a batch of his seventy-eight followers from Sabarmati (Ahmedabad) to the small coastal village of Dandi 240 miles away in

South Gujarat.³⁷ Completing this long trek on the 5th April Gandhi ceremonially broke the salt law the next morning by picking up a lump of salt. The tremendous publicity and enthusiasm which this epic march had evoked and the simple method of breaking law by picking or preparing a commodity in common use like salt or raiding salt-depots for obtaining it fired the imagination of thousands of common people across the sub-continent and they followed their leader by breaking the Salt Law.

Arrests and repression came in swift succession. The Nehrus (father and son) were jailed in April; Gandhi was arrested on May 5 and imprisoned in Yeravada Jail, Poona. The response of the people was overwhelming: strikes, *hartals*, processions, demonstrations, raiding of salt depots, picketing of liquor shops, leaving schools and colleges, etc., etc. And the repression was unprecedented, often quite brutal: jails filled to overflowing, indiscriminate lathi charges breaking heads and limbs, firing on unarmed crowds killing and wounding men and women, hanging; the use of tanks, armoured cars and even air-bombing; and blanket censorship over all this repression and terror. According to the National Congress records 90,000 had been imprisoned during the ten months (upto the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement of March 1931).³⁸ The highest stages the CD movement had reached when people had captured the city of Peshawar and the industrial (textile) town of Solapur in Maharashtra, and more significantly the mutiny of the Royal Garhwali Rifles in the NWF Province refusing to fire on the unarmed Pathan volunteers, and fraternised with them instead.

The rising tempo of the CD movement caused serious alarm amongst government circles, British business in India³⁹ and moderate leaders like Sapru and Jayakar, both of them legal luminaries who acted as intermediaries between the Viceroy and Gandhi and other Congress leaders. In the meanwhile the first RTC was held in London from November 1930 to January 1931.⁴⁰ The Viceroy had managed to collect a crowd of the princes, *zamindars*, industrialists and communal representatives. But in the absence of the main actor of the drama—the Indian National Congress—the Conference proved a fiasco displaying all the sectional differences in India. Incidentally it also proved conclusively that all Indian political leaders, whatever their mutual differences, demanded immediate transfer of power to an Indian Cabinet answerable to an elected legislature.⁴¹

The poor performance of the RTC without the Congress participation and the continuing CD movement in spite of severe repression persuaded the British government to make a vague declaration about 'Responsible Self-Government' in January 1931. This led to resumption of the earlier parleys of the intermediaries to start a dialogue between the Viceroy

and Gandhi, that is, the National Congress. Gandhi and the Congress leadership were unconditionally released immediately. After prolonged negotiations the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement was signed on March 4, 1931.⁴² Its main contents were: acceptance by the British Government of the goal of a Federation covering the whole of India in due course in the future, withdrawal of the CD movement, release of prisoners and the Congress participation in the RTC. In effect the Agreement conceded very little on other demands, not even the withdrawal of the salt tax. Gandhi's Eleven Points were conveniently set aside. The only achievement of the Agreement was that it clearly vindicated the Congress claim of being by far the most important spokesman of the Indian people, and as such it could not be ignored in any future political negotiations. The Agreement was endorsed, not without significant opposition from the young activists and the left nationalists, by the Karachi Congress in March 1931.⁴³ Its most significant achievement was the famous resolution on "Fundamental Rights" which enunciated a progressive social and economic programme: nationalization of basic industries, agrarian reforms, a better deal to workers and many other contents of an advanced democratic character. The Karachi Congress also adopted a resolution which accepted almost all the points of Jinnah (put forward by him in 1928 before the Nehru Committee) except the one about the one-third reservation for the Muslims in the Federal Legislature! As one historian puts it 'unfortunately it came too late'.⁴⁴

By the time of the second RTC in September 1931 the situation had changed considerably. Under the pall of the Great Depression there was reshuffling in the British coalition government making it pronouncedly conservative, to be later replaced by an entirely Conservative government after the general elections. Irwin was replaced in April 1931 by the new Viceroy, Willingdon, an older and more diehard Conservative. In England the Secretary of State for India Wedgewood Benn was displaced by Samuel Hoare, another rigid tory. Gandhi who had insisted on being the sole representative of the Congress implying that he was the only real spokesman of the common Indian people at the RTC found himself in the midst of a menagerie carefully chosen—selected British reactionaries together with lukewarm liberal-labour leaders and equally adamant Indian representatives of the minorities and other sectional interests, each one demanding separate representation. This second session of the RTC was an ignominious failure for the Congress and its 'sole' leader Gandhi who returned to India by the end of 1931.

In the meanwhile the new British set-up in the UK and in India had decided to teach the Congress a lesson, to smash it completely. For this purpose the Viceroy armed himself with drastic powers and all the

machinery of repression and terror were readied to go into action. Gandhi did not want to restart the CD movement but wanted to negotiate with Willingdon on the basis of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement and its violations mainly on the part of the government.⁴⁵ A week after Gandhi's return the Viceroy announced his policy, arrested Gandhi and all the top leaders and the whole coercive machine went into action against the Congress and its followers, who, with no previous preparation for the struggle, were thrown on the defensive. This time the government repression far exceeded that of 1930-31 and used every uncivilized weapon in its armoury against the unarmed volunteers—lathi charges, physical beatings, firings, punitive expeditions, collective fines, seizure of property and lands.⁴⁶ Peasants refused to pay taxes at many places; the UP and NWF province had become armed military camps. According to one estimate 80,000 were jailed in the first four months and the total had reached 120,000 by the end of March 1933.⁴⁷ The government could not, however, carry out so easily this 'fight to the finish'; it took 29 months till the Congress, acknowledging defeat, withdrew the CD movement in May 1934.

Simultaneously the forging of a new constitution for the Government of India was going on in British constitutional mill. The report of the Simon Commission had already gone into the waste paper basket by the turn of events. But by the middle of 1932 MacDonald as the prime-minister of the Coalition government announced the Communal Award for the future Indian Constitution in which the separate electorate scheme for the Muslims was extended to Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and to the depressed classes (or 'untouchables'). Separation of untouchables from the Hindu fold, which this award implied, was made an issue by Gandhi, who started his fast-unto-death in September 1932. This was not only a demand to the British rulers to annul this part of the award, an appeal to Ambedkar not to separate untouchables from the Hindu society of which they have been traditionally a part, but it was an effort also to sensitize the Caste Hindus about the miserable plight of the untouchables and to remove this blot on Hinduism by assimilating them, starting with temple-entry and other ameliorative measures to eradicate untouchability. A week-long hectic negotiations between Gandhi and Ambedkar in the Yeravada jail led to the agreement, the Poona Pact, which conceded double the number of reserved seats for the untouchables but retained joint electorates. At the same time it also persuaded the Caste Hindu leaders to declare that no one among Hindus would be considered untouchable and that these former untouchables (whom Gandhi chose to call *Harijans* or God's people) "will have the same right as other Hindus in regard to the use of public wells, public schools, public roads and other public institutions."⁴⁸ Gandhi decided thenceforth to devote himself mostly to the Harijan cause. In February 1933, still in jail, he started the weekly *Harijan* to promote the cause.⁴⁹

In the early months of 1933 Gandhi and the Congress leadership were conscious that it was time to make a strategic retreat from the CD campaign. Gandhi tried to seek interview with the Viceroy who was adamant that there would be no negotiations unless the movement was unconditionally withdrawn. On the other hand not all Congressmen were willing to accept an unconditional surrender. A couple of 'self-purification' fasts undertaken by Gandhi did not help, nor his attempt of confining *satyagraha* only to one individual, that is, himself. The movement had already died out and it was only right that the Congress Committee, allowed to meet in Patna, should decide to formally call off the CD campaign. It was also decided to contest the coming elections, a decision which was approved also by Gandhi. Accordingly the Swarajists fought the elections and joined the Central Assembly by the end of 1934. Gandhi, however, decided to resign his membership of the Congress.⁵⁰ The reason he gave implied the growth of radical thought within the Congress.⁵¹ Now the Constitutionalists (the Swarajists) were looking forward to election politics.

But the situation was certainly not entirely that of stagnation or demoralization. New stirrings could be easily observed. For instance at the Lucknow Congress in early 1936 important sections of the Congress leadership including the president of the session, Nehru, were trying to place the struggle for India's freedom in the world context, in the context of the struggle against fascism and for socialism. Socialist sections in the Congress had gathered appreciable strength. The agrarian issues—reduction in rents and land revenue, scaling down of debts, abolition of forced or bonded labour, minimum wage for agricultural labour, etc.—were already coming up for discussion; and so was the question of affiliation to the Congress of mass organizations such as trade unions and *Kisan Sabhas*. Thus a sort of ideological polarization was taking place, although not of very clearcut character, among the Congress activists.

Before we go over to the new stage beginning with the election during 1936-37 it would be desirable to refer to the remaining significant issues of this period. First, the mill which was producing the next instalment of "reforms" in England. The third RTC was held in November-December 1932 when the Government of India was engaged in its vicious offensive to stamp out the Congress from the map of India. With this "piece of window-dressing" the RTC operation came to a close.⁵² It was followed by a White Paper in March 1933 on the basis of which the Joint Parliamentary Committee in consultation with an Indian delegation (of no consequence in the absence of the Congress) prepared a bill which in due course became the Government of India Act, 1935, the last such Act made for India by the British. It consisted of two parts:⁵³ (1) Federal part which was a grotesque

piece of bundling together the princely states, the Provinces with responsible elected government and autocratically administered Chief Commissioners' provinces, (2) Provincial Autonomy under which the eleven Provinces of the British India were to be governed. The first part need not concern us because it never came, and in the circumstances, was not likely to come into operation. The Provinces were to have autonomous status with legislatures elected from a broader franchise and reservations for different communities and interests. Ministries formed from the elected members were to be in charge of most of the subjects transferred to the Provinces but under the overall control of the governor. Many important subjects were, however, with the Federal Centre. It is this second part — Provincial Autonomy — which came into operation in 1937; the Central legislature and governance, with some modification, followed the old Act of 1919.⁵⁴

The Hindu-Muslim differences continued with no hope of real reconciliation. Jinnah who became the principal leader of the Muslim League not only talked of the two-nation theory, implying Pakistan, etc., but to support his contention he dubbed the Congress to be the organization representing only the Hindus in India. These differences grew and sharpened and ultimately became irreconcilable ending in the partition of the country in 1947.

If we survey the economic scene, the world depression had its adverse impact on the dependent Indian economy, with the government transferring the burden on the Indian economy. The partial boom of the twenties had exhausted itself giving rise to a big fall in industrial production. The price-fall particularly hit hard Indian agriculture where the pauperization of the poorer peasantry, artisans, and the landless increased rapidly with a consequent exodus to the urban areas. Later Indian industry recovered—textile industry and even steel had maintained themselves thanks to the boycott of British goods, particularly the textiles—relatively rapidly. The agrarian situation, however, continued to deteriorate almost upto the end of the thirties.⁵⁵ The Indian society had by this time thrown up its own big bourgeoisie—the monopolists—which had also increased its influence in the National Congress, in the leadership of the national movement. In the countryside the middle and rich peasants were entering the Congress and providing a wider mass basis for it.

After the setback in the early thirties, particularly after the Meerut trials, the TU movement had reorganized and was moving towards united actions. The agrarian discontent had also started getting organized under *Kisan Sabhas*. These developments were strengthened by the radicalization of the younger political activists. It was during this period that

the Communist party gained greater strength and associated itself more closely with the national movement under the Congress. At the same time the Socialists in the Congress organized themselves in the Congress Socialist group or party, often designated the CSP. Nehru himself was an insistent exponent of socialism and gave an international dimension to Indian freedom movement, and thus was greatly responsible for nurturing this radicalization of the national movement.

Although the CD movement—the upsurge which started in 1928 and lasted till 1934—had suffered a retreat, it had brought about unprecedented political and social awakening among vast segments of people, and particularly their younger leadership: the working class, peasantry, untouchables, and tribals. For the first time women came out of their middle class homes in large numbers into the wider world to brave the rigours of participation in the Freedom Movement. This brought great strength to their organization, the All India Women's Conference (AIWC).

There were many more spillovers of this new awakening, new consciousness: literacy movement and basic education in the educational sphere; greater spread of consciousness about social equality in the caste-ridden (and class-ridden) society carrying the burden of the traditional past; progressive movement in literature and its ideological basis (often described as *navamataবাদ*, meaning new ideology); and a kind of new trend in literature, art and culture, pointing towards a vision of the desirable society in the independent India to come. All in all this period heralded a new era in our socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural consciousness, very often going under the general label of 'Socialism'.

IV. Provincial Autonomy and its Aftermath

The period from 1937 to 1939 marks a new stage in the Indian history when the provincial autonomy under the new Constitution (GOI Act, 1935) was worked by Congress (and other) popularly elected ministries. At the Faizpur Congress in December 1936 the Congress proclaimed its objective as a democratic state in India which would come into existence through a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise which will prepare the country's Constitution. It was also decided to contest the elections under the Provincial Autonomy (of the GOI Act, 1935) in the coming year for which it issued a manifesto. The manifesto reiterated its resolve to work for land reforms and solution of other agrarian problems, promised a decent standard of living and working conditions to the industrial workers, and special attention to women, untouchables and other backward classes, dealing with other questions on the lines of the earlier Karachi Resolution on Fundamental Rights.

With this broad democratic programme voicing the immediate demands of the peasants and workers the Congress gained overwhelming mass support in the elections. Of the total of 1585 seats (in eleven provinces) with only 657 'open general' seats—the rest of them representing communal or sectional interests—the Congress won a total number of 716 seats. Of the 482 Muslim seats the Congress had contested 58 and won only 26, most of them in the NWF province where the Congress leader Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan had considerable influence. The Muslim League won only 109 seats of 482, the other seats going to other local political parties.⁵⁶ Thus once again, despite government's efforts during 1932-34 to 'destroy' the Congress, the elections convincingly showed that it was very much alive and had the largest following. After a preliminary hassle over the use of the special powers of the governor, resolved in its favour, the Congress formed ministries in six provinces where it had a clear majority (Bombay, Madras, UP, Bihar, CP and Orissa), and later in the NWF and in Assam as well in coalition with other parties.

The Congress ministries were in office for twenty-seven months till they resigned in November 1939 (due to differences with the government over dragging India into the World War II, without consulting them). Their achievements were limited, the most important being the widening of civil liberties which helped the democratic advance of the people including trade unions and peasant organizations. Even here they often acted as police administrations of imperialism as is evident from the use of the hated sections 124A (sedition) and 144 (ban on meetings) of the Indian Penal Code; the Madras government, in its early days, even jailed a Congress Socialist leader for sedition! Some of the provincial ministries enacted a few, extremely limited, agrarian legislations, and also initiated some social reform measures like prohibition. They tried to expand health services and proposed educational reforms (e.g. Basic Education) but here their efforts were thwarted by lack of funds. But the predominantly right-wing character of these ministries was evident from the manner in which they tried to curb the expanding influence of the workers' and peasants' organizations (e.g. enactment of the Bombay Industrial Disputes bill in 1938), and even otherwise.

On the whole the Ministers' performance was not only to the satisfaction of right-wing Congress leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel but to that of the imperial rulers as well! This is evident from the testimonial to that effect by Coupland.⁵⁷ But as they got ensconced in their perches they were not without their foibles and failings. "They rewarded friends, curried favour among the richest and the most powerful, ... and often proved vindictive to enemies."⁵⁸ (They look like shades of what was to come after independence and altogether were relatively minor misdemeanours when

compared to what is happening today in the seventies and eighties!) The Congress Parliamentary Board, the supervising and controlling body, had to look into these lapses as well as factionalism and indiscipline, and in one case had to remove from office the premier of a province.

Before ending this section it is necessary to deal with two questions, in some ways connected with the Congress in office, the problem of the Muslims and the factional dissensions in the Congress. The electoral results of 1937 showed convincingly that although the Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership could not claim even a quarter of the Muslim seats, the Congress also had hardly much influence among the Muslim population except in Sind and the NWF. Province its failure to accept Khaliq-uz-Zaman's proposal of including the League's two representatives in a coalition ministry in the UP removed the possible opportunity of forging a Congress-League understanding even at this stage.⁵⁹ Then onwards Jinnah started a tearing campaign to propagate that the Congress only represented the Hindus, and was bent on establishing a Hindu Raj in India, and therefore all Muslims must unite under the Muslim League to foil this Congress game. For this purpose he widely publicised the so-called anti-Muslim policies and measures of the Congress ministries—a few of them real or plausible, the rest imaginary—and succeeded in gathering an increasing following for the League and for himself as the 'supreme leader' (Qaid-e-Azam) of the Muslim India. In this campaign he used all the weapons in his political armoury—speeches, statements, demonstrations, and actions—not without open connivance and approval of the British rulers. When the Congress Ministries resigned in November 1939 he called upon the Muslims in India to celebrate a 'Deliverance Day' and a large majority of the activists did do so. Thus this period of the Congress in office brought grist to the mill of the separatist strategy of Jinnah, the League and the government.

It has been mentioned earlier that all through this period from 1934 onwards, and particularly after 1936, the left influence was rapidly increasing manifesting three trends: the communists, the Congress Socialists who liked to be around Nehru who was himself expounding socialism, and Subhash Bose from Bengal. Gandhi was concerned with this leftward trend which was also gaining influence in the Congress. The rightist establishment of the Congress and Gandhi kept the first at an arm's length, accommodated the second and directed their efforts at popularising the Congress policies among the newly awakening segments including the educated youth. They were suspicious of Subhash Bose although they could not ostracise him for quite some time. Matters came to a head when Bose contested the elections for the Congress presidentship at the Tripura Session in 1938 and won it defeating the Congress establishment's rival candidate Patabhi Sitaramayya. Gandhi's loyal supporters in the Congress executive

resigned in protest and refused to cooperate. Nehru's mediation proved infructuous and Gandhi refused to help Bose, with the result that Bose had to resign. He then established his own faction — the Forward Bloc — in the Congress, and later turned it into a Party outside the Congress, in order to conduct a revolutionary struggle for freedom. World War II had started and in 1940 Subhash Bose managed to escape from the country to Germany and Japan and continue his freedom struggle from where he organized his Indian National Army from amongst the Indian prisoners of war in the south-east Asia.

During the thirties with the growth of Fascism in Europe the clouds of war had started gathering. Nehru boldly took a firm anti-fascist and anti-imperialist stand. The CPI, Nehru and a significant section of the Congress were trying to give an international dimension to Indian politics with a general anti-imperialist and anti-fascist (and sometimes even a clear pro-Soviet) perspective. Thus, in comparison with the First World War period the national movement had greatly matured in its national and international outlook.

V. And Towards Independence and Hopes for a New Socio- Economic Order

War, and particularly that of the dimensions of world war, quickens the pace of political and other developments, both in the international and national context. World War I was thousands of miles away from India and yet, as one effect of its impact on India, the national movement for the first time assumed a militant mass character. World War II, though it did not actively involve geographically an appreciable part of India, had come right upto its eastern doorstep. In a short period of eight years since the war started the whole political landscape changed completely: British imperialism had to transfer power to the Indian people which it did in 1947 after partitioning the country into two independent States of India and Pakistan.

This section will briefly review these developments: first, we shall sketch the time-contour of the war as it developed; second, we shall deal with the triangular moves and countermoves of the three main actors — the British imperialism, the Congress and the Muslim League; finally, we shall mention the far-reaching socio-economic and socio-cultural changes that occurred during the period.

The major participants in World War II were the Axis powers Germany, Italy and Japan on the one side and the Alliance of France, Britain, USSR, USA and China on the other. It started in September 1939 after

the invasion of Poland by Germany which, in the first phase, extended it to the Central European and North European countries and stopped short of the USSR. After the 'phony' war for almost a year Germany invaded West-European countries, conquered the entire France forcing the British forces to withdraw to England from Dunkirk in the summer of 1940. The battle of Britain then onwards went on for six months but proved relatively abortive and in the ensuing period the Axis powers invaded the rest of Europe except Spain and Portugal and occupied large parts of North Africa upto Egypt. In June 1941 Germany suddenly attacked the USSR driving deep into its territory which brought about the Atlantic Alliance, that is, the USA became more active with military aid. In December 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and in three months it occupied the whole of South-East Asia bringing the war to India's border, and launched on a more active penetration of China. It looked as though the Axis of Fascism was striding over half the world, and the final alignment of big powers was complete. From the middle of 1942, after the battle of Stalingrad, the USSR began to roll back the East-European front, the Anglo-Americans to recover North-African countries and then South Europe with a landing in Italy. This counter-offensive gradually gained considerable momentum and with the opening of the second front in 1944 in France the Axis powers were in retreat on all fronts in Europe. The war in Europe ended in May 1945 with the capture of Berlin by the USSR from the east and Anglo-Americans from the west. The Anglo-American forces were already on the move against Japan from 1943, but this front became much more active in 1945 and by the summer of 1945, after Hitler's defeat, the end was in sight when the USA used atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki forcing the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

India was not only vital for the British Empire for peace-time exploitation but also served as an important base of strategic significance for war-time purposes — a source of troops and supplies as well as entrepot for men and materials on their way from the UK (or now the USA) to many theatres of war. Clearly the British imperialists wanted to keep it firmly under their control during the Second World War too, which they did using it in all the capacities mentioned above throughout the war from 1939 to 1945 and even upto 1946. Indian troops fought in North Africa, Italy, Abyssinia, the Middle East and the South-East Asia.

Before we consider Indian political developments it should be remembered that the advanced sections of Indian political opinion—the Communists, Congress Socialists, Nehru's followers in the Congress, and many others — were keenly aware of the developing European political situation ever since the rise of fascism in Europe. The rape of Abyssinia by Mussolini, the rise of Hitler and his openly aggressive harangues, their in-

tervention in Spain to bring a fascist dictatorship in power, the Anglo-French imperialists' incitements to Hitler to attack the USSR, the grave possibility of another imperialist war in Europe, Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia, Austria and Munich, all these had received their anxious attention, as will be seen from the Congress resolutions on the international situation, mainly at Nehru's behest. One of its actual manifestations was the huge one-day strike of 2,90,000 Bombay workers in October 1939 (just after the War had started) with resounding cries of "Down with Imperialist War" and "Long live Independence." Thus unlike World War I India was this time alert to the impending war, the underlying issues and their significance in the context of India's struggle for independence.

Therefore, when the Viceroy made the announcement on September 3, 1939 that Britain was at war and *ipso facto* India was also at war, without previous deliberations with Indian political leaders, and assumed dictatorial emergency powers just by issuing a Defence of India Ordinance, the news evoked great dismay and strong protests in the country. The Congress challenged the government to declare unequivocally their war aims, and particularly, their perspective regarding India's freedom and war-time arrangements on an equal footing as a sovereign country.⁶⁰ As there was no satisfactory reply from the government the Congress asked its provincial ministries to resign, which they did in October/November 1939. This provided a welcome opportunity to the Muslim League for boosting their strength by observing a 'Day of Deliverance' from the (Hindu) Congress tyranny!⁶¹ In March 1940 the League took a further step by proclaiming the existence of two nations in India and that the League alone represented the Muslim nation.⁶² With this Lahore resolution, often called the Pakistan resolution, demanding separate 'homelands' and 'autonomous national states' Jinnah and the League had taken, in a sense, a decisive irrevocable step towards the partition of the country, for the separate Muslim State of Pakistan.

The left political opinion—the CPI, the Congress Socialists and left Congressmen—was denouncing the war as one more imperialist war and insisting that the Congress should have nothing to do with it and proceed forthwith to prepare for the struggle for complete independence.⁶³ But the Congress was bidding time reiterating its stand. After the fall of France in June 1940 the Congress made a new offer of cooperation conditional on the recognition of Indian independence and the establishment of a 'Provisional National Government at the Centre' commanding confidence of all elected members in the Central Legislature. To this the government replied with the 'August-Offer' which talked of 'responsible Government' some time later (after the War) representing all sections of Indian population—thus allowing the exercise of veto to the Muslim League, the Princes.

etc.—and enlargement of the Viceroy's Executive Council by nominating additional Indians. The unsatisfactory nature of this 'Offer' and the discontent among the left sections induced the Congress to take an immediate action programme which was the individual civil disobedience campaign under Gandhi's leadership inaugurated in October 1940.⁶⁴ Till May 1941 this symbolic action had resulted in 20,000 arrests. In the meanwhile the government had started a ruthless attack on the radical elements and the working class and peasant organizations.

The German attack on the USSR in June 1941 brought a quick political response from the Indian national opinion. After some deliberation the CPI changed its political line of complete opposition to the War and adopted the People's War line of support—with certain obvious reservations—implying the postponement of the all-out anti-imperialist struggle. Nehru also recognized that the progressive forces of the world were "now aligned with the alliance of Russia, Britain, America and China."⁶⁵ But the government's reaction was negative. While the Atlantic Charter of August 1941 announced the Anglo-American policy of upholding the right of all peoples to self-determination, Churchill issued an official statement the very next month that the Charter did not apply to the British empire and, in particular to India.

After the Japanese aggression in the East from December 1941 and its rapid advance the Congress renewed its offer stating explicitly that they will cooperate in the armed resistance to the Axis powers as an ally of the United Nations provided a National Government was installed in India forthwith. In February 1942 Roosevelt declared that the Atlantic Charter covered the whole world. But the British government did not budge. In early March Rangoon fell, the Japanese forces were on the border of India. Quickly followed the Cripps Mission which held parleys in India in March-April.⁶⁶

The Cripps offer was a reiteration of the 'August Offer', although couched in more palatable terms. By now the League's demand, as voiced by Jinnah, had crystallized into Muslim self-determination in an independent India, and parity with the ('Hindu') Congress in any provisional set up, together with recognition as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims in any interim arrangement. In all future tripartite negotiations the League stuck to this stand which had the approval of the British government which used it at all stages either to stall the issue of immediate settlement or to checkmate the demands of the national movement represented by the Congress. Gandhi had now assumed leadership of the Congress. Since the Cripps' terms would have continued the British rule essentially as it was until the end of the war, Gandhi labelled them as 'a post-dated che-

que on a failing bank.' He asked him in exasperation "Why did you come if this is what you have to offer?" and advised him to take the first plane home.⁶⁷

By May/June 1942 the war situation had become critical both in the West and East, and the Japanese army was knocking at the eastern frontier of India. The Congress activists were getting restless both at the prospect of the Japanese invasion and the political stone-walling on the part of the government.⁶⁸ Sensing the mood and to take advantage of the difficult war situation the Congress Working Committee decided in July 1942 to unleash a non-cooperation movement under the behest of Gandhi which was followed by the Quit-India resolution in August. Actually the Congress had formally not started the struggle though, when started, it was expected to be sharp and swift. Although Gandhi had called the coming struggle as an 'open rebellion' he was hoping to start negotiations on the basis of the resolution.⁶⁹ He and other Congress leaders were perhaps not aware that the government had made all preparations this time to strike hard at the first excuse and crush the movement with all the force at their command. The Quit-India resolution of August 1942 and Gandhi's speech that evening provided the necessary provocation and the government arrested overnight all the Congress leaders of any importance. The arrests provoked a nationwide outburst. But except for some sections of leadership who had gone underground and had made some preparations it was an unorganized series of spontaneous demonstrations and actions by the incensed people. The government unleashed a leonine violence to crush this revolt with a mailed fist creating a reign of terror, fear and hatred. The government's own official count was more than a thousand deaths, three thousand wounded, and more than 60 thousand arrested till the end of the year.⁷⁰ The government succeeded in crushing the popular revolt and for the moment thought it triumphed.

Early 1943 Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy from the prison to resume negotiations and thus to extricate himself from the situation created by the August resolution. But the latter was sitting pretty since the tide of war in Europe was turning in their favour and in Asia Japan was still chewing what it had swallowed. Linlithgow retired from his long tenure of viceroyalty and the soldier, Field Marshall Wavell, assumed charge in June 1943. In that year Bengal suffered from a severe famine due to transport crisis, acute rice shortage because of the demands of the army and the loss of imports from Burma, official ineptitude in not starting distribution and rationing, and traders' greed. In this 'man-made' catastrophe 1.5 million (official estimate) to 3.5 million (unofficial sample survey estimate) died, many of them in the streets of Calcutta, a number, ten to thirty to times the total Indian casualties in the war.⁷¹

In early 1943 Subhash Bose left Germany and reached Singapore where with Japanese cooperation he formed the Indian National Army (INA) from amongst the 60,000 Indian prisoners of war lodged there. He soon made Rangoon the capital of his 'provisional government' of India and in March next year he started the INA campaign. Reaching the outskirts of Imphal, the north-eastern border town in India, he could not proceed further, and had to trek back from there. With the advancing Anglo-American forces the INA surrendered in Rangoon in May 1945. Bose escaped on a plane bound for Japan but died in Formosa (now Taiwan) after getting seriously injured in a plane crash.

Early 1944 Wavell wrote to Gandhi and released him later in May 1944. On his release Gandhi immediately announced the cancellation of the part of the August resolution pertaining to mass civil disobedience, thus officially ending the August revolt. Gandhi then proceeded to have talks with Jinnah in September in order to seek his agreement so as to face the government with a common proposal; but the talks failed as Jinnah stuck fast to his original stand. In spite of a few more proposals, which were new versions of the old ones, the deadlock remained unbroken with no fresh moves until the release of the Congress Working Committee which took place in June 1945 when the war in Europe had already ended in May.

Although the victory in Europe had eased the British position to a large extent the war against Japan was still on and expected to last for another year. Fresh initiatives were, therefore, shown by Wavell calling a conference at Simla in June 1945. This time Jinnah objected to Azad, a Muslim, representing the Congress. Due to this and other issues on which no ice could be broken the Simla conference failed. The next two months saw two events of great significance: In July the Labour party won the elections in Britain defeating the Tories (and Churchill) by a thumping majority; in August the Americans used two devastating atom bombs forcing Japan to surrender, thus removing the British government's anxiety of keeping India lined up against Japan. The urge for an immediate settlement over, the tripartite—the government, the Congress and the League—manoeuvres went on with no end in sight. In the meanwhile at Cripps' suggestion Wavell secured the agreement of the two principals to hold elections to Provincial and Central Legislatures, after almost eight years, in order to gauge their present strengths. In the elections held in February 1946, the Congress won an overwhelming majority of the 'general' seats both at the Centre and the Provinces and the League won all the Muslim seats at the Centre and 439 out of 494 Muslim seats in the Provinces, thus confirming a definite bipolar political structure much to the delight of Jinnah.⁷²

Alongside the elections there was a new national upsurge during 1945-46 due both to post-war stirrings all over the world and the pent-up national discontent. The Red Fort trials of the captured officers of Subhash Bose's INA made them into national heroes. This stirred the soldiers and officers of the British Indian army, navy and air force. In Calcutta several members of the Air Force refused to obey orders and on the 18th February the naval ratings in Bombay mutinied and held their positions for three days. In sympathy the Bombay working class took to streets from 21-23 February at the call of their trade unions and the CPI.⁷³ There were pitched battles with the police and troops for three days and indiscriminate firings by the police and the British military in which 250 persons were killed.⁷⁴ Vallabhbhai Patel of the Congress had to intervene personally to negotiate a 'surrender' of the ratings. The Bombay Naval Strike began on February 18. On February 19, Attlee announced the British government's decision to hold fresh talks in India and send a three-man Cabinet Mission consisting of Pethick-Lawrence, Cripps and Alexander. Obviously the British government concluded that they could no longer hold India by force; they had to withdraw quickly and strike a compromise.

Before we deal with the Cabinet Mission and its offer we may digress and consider the popular national upsurge of 1945-46, the Congress attitude towards it and relate it to the 1942 revolt. After the war, from 1945 onwards besides the discontent in the armed forces and their manifestations mentioned above there were strikes galore of the workers and peasant struggles like the *tebhaga* struggle in Bengal. But the Congress leadership did not support any of them. They maintained throughout a strict stance of 'No Struggle.' Later after assuming power they did not reinstate either the INA men nor the naval ratings. Once they saw the prospect of power through compromise, with or without partition, they were interested in securing the whole governmental machinery, including that of repression, undamaged in their hands, even with the partition of the country whose unity they had always been swearing by. The nation-wide mass struggles at this stage would have endangered the socio-economic structure which they had pledged to revolutionize but which in fact they wanted to preserve. Looking back, the August struggle, officially unsanctioned, but for which the Congress takes credit, was not meant to be an all-out struggle of the people, carefully well-prepared. It was an attempt to exercise the maximum pressure on the British rulers, when the war situation looked extremely precarious, in order to (i) hustle the government to part with power, (ii) if possible circumvent the League in the process, and (iii) prevent the left-oriented Congressmen, socialists and above all the communists to start a real struggle. While disowning the August struggle they had no hesitation in using it to nationally ostracise the CPI for their policy during the war. All this meant that the Indian bourgeoisie which was the

leading class in the national movement had come of age and was trying its best to caputre power and above all the colonial government's undamaged administrative and coercive machine for its own use in the self-governing India.⁷⁵

Returning to the Cabinet Mission of March 1946 the plan it finally left on departure in June comprised: (a) a complicated federal structure based on grouping of Provinces in a manner which would lead to a number of States (including the Princely States) with a right to opt out, and (b) an interim cabinet with precarious numerical balance which would result in the two principal sharers of power—the Congress and the League—being always at loggerheads. The plan failed because the first part was unacceptable to both the Congress and the League and the second part could not cross the hurdles of initial mutual distrust. We shall not go into the details of the ensuing hectic developments, and political manoeuvres all grim and of a cut-throat character which may be listed as: the Congress agrees to work the Cabinet Mission plan; Jinnah suspects Congress-British plot against the League; Jinnah's call for 'Direct Action Day' on August 16 and 'the Great Calcutta Killing' (5,000 dead, 20,000 injured and one lakh rendered homeless),⁷⁶ and frenzied communal riots at many other places; the Congress joins the interim cabinet in September 1946, the League refuses with a view to obstruct, but later joins to obstruct from within; the Constituent Assembly meets in December, the League refuses to join; Wavell, Nehru and Jinnah called to London in December for talks which fail; etc., etc. The denouement came in February 1947 with Attlee's announcement that Britain will part with power by June 1948 leaving it into 'responsible Indians hands' and the replacement of Wavell by Mountbatten.

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi in March 1947 and held talks with all the concerned people but the deadlock remained unbroken. In the meanwhile Mountbatten had built friendly relations with Gandhi and Nehru, and other Congress leaders. In June the Punjab burst into flames with communal riots. Finally, Mountbatten announced the British decision to partition the country into two states on communal lines taking district as a unit, and quit the Indian subcontinent on the 15th August 1947. The Princely States were 'freed' but advised to join the respective new States of India and Pakistan. The Commission presided over by Radcliff speedily drew the boundaries in the Punjab and Bengal, and divided the assets and liabilities. Communal killings had started in the contended areas and also throughout the country from the beginning of the year. But Mountbatten's decision for a speedy withdrawal without making adequate preparations to safeguard life and property in the provinces through which the boundary line ran made the situation worse in these areas. The troop provision to be

made by Mountbatten and his C-in-C were totally inadequate. In the two months nearly 10 million persons were uprooted from their hearths and homes to seek shelter across the boundary and more than a million lost their lives.⁷⁷

On August 14/15 came into existence the two Dominions: India with Mountbatten as the Governor-General and Pakistan with Jinnah as the Governor-General. But the man whom they later named 'the Father of the Nation', Gandhi, was away in Bengal and Bihar providing a healing touch to the riot-hit poor. He could not remain in Delhi for the transfer of power, and its pomp and celebrations, saying that this Independence stank in his nostrils. He had promised to bring independence to a united India through non-violence and *satyagraha* but history belied both his aims and means.

Let us now briefly review the economic and social change which had taken place since 1939. Since, as mentioned before, India became the main supply depot in the east. Because shipping and transport had become risky and difficult, India had to become the producer-supplier of a large number of the necessary goods. There was an industrial and trade boom during the war period. Industrial capacity could not match the demand because the necessary plants and machinery could not be imported due to transport difficulties and also due to the governmental obstruction. But even within these limits industrial production grew very rapidly: iron and steel, textiles, paper, cement, etc. For instance in the years of the war Tatas doubled their production of steel to 1.5 million tons. New ventures were started: aluminium industry, bicycles, locomotives, chemical, pharmaceutical, light engineering works, etc. Factories were working at (or even above) maximum capacity. Industrial employment increased from 1.75 million in 1939 to 2.52 million in 1944. The Indian bourgeoisie reaped enormous profits — the index of average net profits in 1943 with 1939 as base stood at: Jute 926, cotton 626, tea 392, sugar 218, miscellaneous 401 and all kinds 327.⁷⁸

India being the main entrepot for supplies, and even otherwise, because of indigenous supplies the trading bourgeoisie also amassed huge fortunes, a large part of them due to speculative trade which had cashed on scarcity and the consequent price-rise. They were biding their time for starting new industries. In the meanwhile many of the industrialists and big traders were buying over or becoming collaborators in foreign (mainly British) enterprises in India. Some of them had already grown into monopoly capitalists.

For most of the goods and services India made available she got in return only the promises to pay by the British Government. Thus India's

Sterling Balances, after wiping out the pre-war Sterling debt Rs. 426 crores, had accumulated to the huge amount of Rs. 1733 crores by 1946⁷⁹. Indian bourgeoisie were looking forward to encash them for capital goods after the war and attainment of the country's independence. This was also an important factor for the hastened pace for the transfer of power peacefully so as to maintain cordial relations with their British counterpart.

During this period with its vastly increased strength and confidence the Indian capitalism was thinking in a big way about rapid economic development in India in the post-war, post-colonial period. This is reflected in the *Bombay Plan* put forward by them in 1944-45.⁸⁰ Of course there were also other Plans mooted, e.g., the plan prepared by the National Planning Committee of the Congress, *A People's Plan* produced by M.N. Roy and *A Gandhian Plan* drafted by S.N. Agarwal. In other words economic planning in the independent India to come became a fact universally accepted.

This entire war effort created a number of new jobs and positions in the armed forces, industry, trade and services: as officers and men, workers, technicians, mechanics, managerial personnel and entrepreneurs; traders and shopkeepers; clerks, typists, stenographers, rationing office staff, etc. The unemployment of the thirties was reduced, and particularly in the case of the educated middle classes it almost disappeared. (This is perhaps one reason why in spite of the increased national awakening the freedom struggle did not get adequate response during the war period as it did before in the civil disobedience movement of the thirties, or in the days after the war.) These new job-opportunities also provided training to people which facilitated the development of industry, the defence forces and the service sector in the first decade of independence.

The war-time expansion and differentiation of jobs had also a significant social impact. There was migration from the rural areas to the cities and towns, inducing regional and social mobility. Moreover, both because of the job opportunities as well as the need to earn more income in the shrinking family resources due to price-rise, middle-class and lower middle class women came out of the cosy comfort of the house to work in offices in both the public and private sectors as clerks, stenographers, rationing office workers or even as 'WACI (Women's Auxiliary Corps of India) girls'. Thus the women's awakening of the previous decade — mainly due to the rising national consciousness — took a significant stride during the war. Inevitably independent work outside homes along with educational advance had also a corresponding impact on the social relations as well as relations within the family.⁸¹

It is these legacies of the war period — economic development, national consciousness, urge for socio-economic transformation (socialism), concern for the rights and uplift of the poor and exploited proclaimed so often by the national leaders, and the urgent need for change in the social structure (social reform) — which sustained the Independent India and carried it forward during the initial period after Independence. At the same time its negative features began to act as fetters to further progress. The historic task before Independent India was, therefore, to enrich and carry forward the positive aspects of these legacies and to overcome their negative aspects by breaking new paths for that purpose.

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16. E.g. R.P. Dutt, *op.cit.*, pp. 405-406; Wolpert, *op.cit.*, pp. 303-304.
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20. *Ibid.*, pp. 494-495.
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26. Tara Chand, Vol. 4, p. 82.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 83; R.P. Dutt, p. 357.
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58. Wolpert, p. 325.
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67. Wolpert, p. 334.
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71. R.P. Dutt, pp. 262-267; Wolpert, p. 336.
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CHAPTER TWO

Social History of Education in Pre-Independence India

It is against the general background of politico-economic and social developments outlined briefly in the last chapter that we shall deal with the educational developments during this period from 1920 to the attainment of Independence in 1947. As in the case of the general scene of political developments, here also, the period immediately preceding the advent of Montford Reforms in 1920-21, is a significant divide for further educational developments. It is therefore useful to briefly describe the salient features of the educational situation from 1920 and the new trends and stirrings presaging the new period.

I. Educational Scene before 1920

After almost a century of acquaintance with modern, Western (that is, English) education, and more than sixty years after Wood's famous despatch (1854) formalising the educational policy of the British government, and the establishment of schools, high schools and universities, the total educational spread in India was extremely limited in relation to the size of this country of 315 millions. This will be observed from the figures for 1921-22 given in the synoptic Tables given at the end. Moreover, it was confined mostly to the socially and economically advanced segments of society.

In primary education, which provides in a sense a vital index of a country's educational progress, the total enrolment by 1920 was only between 2 and 3 per cent of the population compared to 15 per cent in most advanced countries. Hence, literacy was extremely low, according to the 1921 Census, only 7.2 per cent of the total population. Its slow growth and extreme unevenness will be clear from the fact that during the forty years preceding the 1921 Census male literacy crawled from 9.0 per cent to 12.2 and female literacy from 0.4 per cent to 1.8¹¹ Actually this was not much of an advance even compared to Adam's estimates of literacy almost

a hundred years ago.² An important reason for this slow progress was the discouragement and neglect of indigenous schools of traditional variety in the rural areas,³ and a very slow advance of the new primary schools run by the Government or local bodies, or of the recognized (or 'registered') aided schools run by private individuals.

In contrast, secondary and higher education, that is High Schools and Colleges, had expanded much more rapidly, although even here the total effort for a country of India's size was very inadequate. According to the policy followed in this respect these institutions were mostly under private management. By 1920 many a taluka town could claim a High School. Both secondary and higher education, however, suffered from serious handicaps. First, in all High Schools and Colleges the medium of instruction was the English language. Instruction was given in Indian languages only at the primary and lower middle stage. Thus, even after six decades of English education in India, the British rulers followed the 'filtration' theory of the mid-fifties of the nineteenth century. Their educational policies in India continued to follow the same objective of the initial period, of producing English-knowing Indians with a smattering of modern learning, for manning the subordinate government services and clerical jobs in the private sector. This deliberate policy inevitably resulted in a serious lag in all the linguistic, literary and general cultural advance in the country.

Secondly, both at the secondary and higher educational levels education was of the literary, liberal variety and was unhelpful for India's industrial or commercial development. There was very little provision for technical, vocational and professional education except in a few institutions teaching law, medicine and engineering.⁴ Consequently, most matriculates and school-leavers as well as graduates were qualified for hardly anything else except clerical positions mostly in government services or in the teaching profession in government-aided private institutions. Thus, some sort of a white-collar job, preferably in the bureaucracy, became the goal of most of those who passed the school-leaving or college-leaving examinations.

Some comments on the state of education in India on the eve of the Montford reforms are in order. First, the backwardness, the lag and the extreme inadequacy of coverage and lopsidedness mentioned above. Here the principal reason was evidently the colonial rule which had hardly any interest in India's advance in general, and the educational advance in particular, beyond that dictated by its objective of the exploitation of the Indian subcontinent, and of preserving the empire. These were occasionally tempered by concessions to appease the increasing popular pressures. Hence the extreme miserliness in funds and attention to education. There

were other factors as well — some like dire poverty due to the colonial exploitation and some others like extreme social inequities and inequalities inherent in the social system including the caste structure and untouchability. All these conspired to result in: very low enrolment, high wastage and stagnation, and subsequent lapse into illiteracy; neglect, as mentioned above, of the indigenous, traditional village schools instead of harnessing them for primary education with suitable renovation and modernization; meagre provision of funds for education (and all other 'nation-building' activities); inordinate, unjustifiable emphasis on the learning of English language resulting in the neglect of Indian languages; and policy of encouraging High School and college education at the expense of mass education — primary and middle-level education, the latter preferably of the vocational variety.

At the same time one should also note that the educational policy under the British rule led to some far-reaching social changes because of its drive to free the Indian society from its traditional feudal moorings, towards colonial capitalism. The new education introduced the Indian educated to modern learning, including modern natural and social sciences, and exposed them to modern ideas, the ideas of liberalism, the philosophy of capitalism. Recognizing the right of all sections of society to education, schools and colleges opened their doors, at least formally, to many who were hitherto deprived of education, like women, the lower castes and even untouchables. Moreover, the use of the printed word in education and also for dissemination of other ideas and information through books, newspapers and periodicals was in itself of far-reaching significance. As Marx pointed out in his *Articles on India*, written in the eighteen-fifties, the British rule in this country was essentially a subjugating and therefore a destructive process, but because of its capitalist character, it nonetheless started a regenerative process of advance. And this was also true of the new education in the British Indian empire.

The Montford reforms which came into force in 1921 made several changes in the British educational policy and unfolded the subsequent educational developments. Before we deal with them it is both necessary and desirable to describe briefly the new trends and stirrings which had already become manifest during the preceding period.⁵

First, the demand for the abolition of the IES (Indian Educational Service) and stopping British recruitment to educational service in India. This was not only part of the general demand for Indianization of services but also due to the fact that, unlike some of the early pioneers, the British recruitment in the IES had by now become mostly mediocre in scholarship. Secondly, since education was a 'nation-building' activity, there was

insistence on providing much more funding and also on bringing the policy-making process down from the olympian heights of the Centre to the Provinces and also on decentralizing it further for its quicker spread and improvement of quality.

The Government of India Resolution of 1913 had announced a more liberal grant-in-aid policy with regard to universities and other levels of education. It also favoured the establishment of at least, one university in each Province. As a follow-up, the number of universities increased from five to twelve in the period of 1916-1920, the new universities being Mysore, Patna, Banaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow and Osmania (at Hyderabad, Deccan). The establishment of Benaras (Hindu University), Aligarh (Muslim University) and Osmania University (which adopted Urdu as a medium of instruction) were in response to the assertion of various indigenous cultural identities.⁶

The appointment of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) and its recommendations for restructuring the educational pattern is often considered a major landmark in higher education. Its principal proposals were: adoption of a uniform structural pattern of ten years of school education, followed by a school-type, two-year Intermediate course, leading to the three-year degree course; a consequent recommendation for Intermediate Colleges; advocacy of unitary teaching universities serving specific regions like the proposed University at Dacca; elevation of the degree course to a three-year Honours course; promotion of post-graduate departments and research; provision of technological education as well as professional and vocational education at the High School and Intermediate stage; and special encouragement for the education of Muslims and also for women's education; etc. Essentially they were some kind of measures to meet the oft-expressed Indian aspirations at the level of university and college education, as well as that of secondary education.

An on-going insistent demand was that for the provision of compulsory and free primary education. This can be traced back to Dadabhai Naoroji's pronouncements of more than two decades before, and for which G.K. Gokhale had waged a valiant yet unsuccessful battle (1910-12) in the Central Legislature. The issue was taken up again by Vithalbhai Patel, this time in the Bombay Legislative Council, which passed, perhaps, the first legislation on the subject in British India, the Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act in 1918. This lead was followed in several other Provinces. So the question of mass education was now firmly on the educational agenda.⁷

By this time Indian languages were already used as media at the lower secondary level, the lower standards in High Schools.⁸ Its natural corollary

was the plea for replacing English by Indian languages as media of instruction at the High School and collegiate levels. This was an important part of the demand for 'National Education' (which will be briefly referred to below). The decision of the National Congress to restructure its regional committees on linguistic lines in 1920 was in fact the political counterpart of this decades-old demand, and was a promise of linguistic reorganization of States in the Independent India to come.

Finally, the most comprehensive of the educational demands of the politically awakened Indian public opinion was the demand for 'National Education'. Together with *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi* and Boycott (of British goods) this had been one of the basic planks of the political strategy of the national movement from 1905-1906. Since then and, even before, beginning from the appointment of the Indian Education Commission (1882-83) by the British government, many Indian educationists and most political leaders had been expressing their strong dissatisfaction with the official educational system in India. By National Education they meant complete Indian control over the policies and administration of education in India, and that its objectives, contents and methods should be in tune with the modern times and the emerging Indian nation but at the same time preserving links with its own heritage of civilization and culture. While welcoming modern learning, modern science, technology and social sciences, and modern methods of learning and teaching, they wanted them to be decisively oriented towards an all-sided national advance of the Indian people. Naturally enough the programmes of National Education would comprise among other things, a rapid spread of literacy and mass primary education, replacement of English by Indian languages, cultivation of a national outlook, a much greater complement of vocational and professional education, and improvement of the quality of education all along the line.

In pursuance of these objectives a number of patriotic Indians had started schools and colleges under private management, like the Deccan Education Society, within the official system, trying to give it a nationalist orientation. Since such efforts had obvious limitations, a few schools and colleges were also established outside the official system, particularly since 1905. In spite of sustained, tenacious endeavours by self-sacrificing groups of individuals, however, a large number of them could not survive for long. By 1920 many of these 'National' High Schools (like the Samartha Vidyalaya at Talegaon, near Pune and many more in Bengal) had to be closed down for want of public support and pupils, or to join the official system. A new upsurge of National Education outside the official system occurred again during the Non-Cooperation Movement in the early twenties. (This will be described later at its proper place.)

It should be pointed out, however, that the questioning of the existing educational system was universal in India. Not only the advocates of 'national education' but many others, as noted by the Calcutta University Commission, had a sense of keen dissatisfaction about the English education in India, particularly the higher education, about its aridity and sterility. It was felt that it had little bearing on political and social evolution in India and did not give the student a sense of confidence that "the miseries, sordidness and inefficiency that surround him are not inevitable". This education had admirably served the government by providing a body of faithful and able servants but had failed to bring forth a new Indian generation based on its own culture and which could assert itself in the presence of the manhood of the world. "Western education has given us much... but at a cost as regards culture,.... as regards respect for self... and the nobility and dignity of the individual." This was the general opinion. It was the general experience that too many of the educated (Indians) valued knowledge because it "brings success in life — often success in a vulgar sense". These sentiments expressed by those who gave evidence before the (Calcutta University) Commission fully reflected the predicament of the many thoughtful Indians, not necessarily belonging to the National Congress.

This then was briefly the educational scene in India by 1920 before the changes introduced by the Montford Reforms.

II. Politico-Economic Factors behind Education Changes: 1920-37

The Montford Reforms, enacted as the Government of India Act of 1919, came into force in 1920-21 with the formation of legislatures both at the Centre and the Provinces. The legislatures had a majority of members elected on a somewhat wider franchise than before, representing various interests. The Act made most of education a Provincial subject excepting some minor parts of it like the universities of Benaras and Aligarh, legislations concerning universities and some special items of education. In a sense this was formalization of the actual position as regards the administration of education which existed all along.

The differences lay elsewhere: First, the finances for education no longer came from the Centre and this ceased most of the Central initiative in and influence on education. Second, the Act introduced a dual system of administration, called Dyarchy, in the Provinces bifurcating the administration into *Reserved* and *Transferred* Departments. The former was managed by the Executive Councillors who were appointees of the Governor and the provincial legislatures had no control over them. The latter,

which included education, was in charge of Indian Ministers, appointed by the Governor from among the 'elected' members of the legislatures. The Indian Ministers were, in a sense, expected to enjoy the confidence of the legislatures in administering their portfolios.

The new arrangements had serious inherent difficulties about resources and administration. Under the division of resources laid down by the Act between the Centre and the Provinces the latter had to fend for themselves in respect of funds. During the initial years they had also to make substantial subventions to the Centre until the latter developed its own resources of direct taxes like income tax, etc. The Centre having stopped giving financial aid to education also largely lost interest in this nation-building activity. This meant the cessation of its former coordinating, and policy-making role, and its measures for making good imbalances and inequalities by bringing succour to the provinces backward in education. Again, in the provincial administration all the 'spending' departments like education were with the Ministers while the revenue-raising portfolios were administered by the Executive Councillors responsible solely to the Governor. This meant in practice insurmountable constraints on innovative programmes in the expansion and improvement of education. The Minister could expatiate a lot about ambitious aims, objectives and programmes in education but was in no position to bring about any far-reaching changes for lack of funds. This invidious situation continued till the advent of the Provincial Autonomy, under the Government of India Act, 1935, which came into force in 1937. Even then many of these constraints remained but this kind of deliberate distinction between *Reserved* and *Transferred* departments disappeared.

The other consequence, the cessation of the Central role in education mentioned above, deprived the Provinces of ready access to and utilization of the all-India educational information about the spread, improvements and innovative experimentation in education elsewhere — in other provinces. In the new dispensation the Provinces also lost the guiding hand of an all-India policy perspective and a reliable source for tiding over the financial deficiencies in specific provinces. For instance, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) established in 1920 for such exchange of information, views, discussion and expert advice was discontinued in 1923 as a measure of retrenchment. The same was the fate of Bureau of Education which had been collecting and publishing statistical information about education. After the Hartog Committee's strictures on "the divorce of the Government of India from education", the CABE was revived in 1935 and the Central Government could again evince interest in education, although in a rather limited manner. The situation continued without much difference under the Provincial Autonomy, until the Transfer

of power in 1947. It was only then that the Centre assumed the role of a coordinator of educational activities in the States, a clearing house of information, and as a general hand devising a comprehensive educational policy.

Another constraint on the initiative of the Ministers of Education was the presence of the existing personnel of the Indian Educational Service (IES), mainly its European members, occupying strategic top-level positions in the educational administrations. Having been assured of the continuation of their seniority, and other special rights and privileges, they could often be obstructive in the chalking out of new policies. The behaviour of IES members often resulted in the curtailment of powers of the Ministers. Moreover, many of them were conservative in outlook and in favour of the *status quo*. In actual practice much depended on the actual persons and the personal relationship between them and the Minister. Fortunately, following the Lee Commission's recommendations, fresh recruitment to the IES was discontinued in 1924, and whether European or Indian, it became a gradually vanishing species. But throughout this period the IES cadre imposed quite some constraint on the functioning of the department. A consequential difficulty was in the matter of building up of alternative Provincial Educational Services where shortsighted parsimony prevented the departments from securing really able (Indian) personnel to man the higher posts. The situation improved only towards the end of the thirties.

A vital part of the educational administration visualized under the new set-up was the devolution of powers, especially with regard to mass education, comprising mostly the primary and elementary education, to the local bodies — municipalities in the urban areas and local boards (with school boards) in the rural areas. This was the second big step of decentralization of powers to local bodies after Ripon's measures in 1884. For mustering local initiative and enthusiasm such decentralization was certainly unexceptionable but the Government's policy in this respect was not necessarily based on either benevolent or even administrative considerations. It was also an effort to create local centres of patronage and parochial vested interests, as a counterweight to the growing tempo of the National Movement in which the leadership was till then mostly in the hands of urban, upper-class, upper-caste leadership. In many provinces, bereft of adequate departmental supervision, these local bodies administering education became fiefs for the exercise of personal and factional power, resulting in gross favouritism, malpractices and undue interference with administration. This gave rise to adverse public reaction to the educational administration at this level. (This will be referred to again in a later section.) It attracted severe strictures in the Hartog Committee's Report and by the

time of the introduction of the Provincial Autonomy substantive remedial measures were felt necessary to control and improve this important aspect of administration.

In spite of these constraints and contradictions inherent in the situation there was undoubtedly some scope — although a limited one — for trying out new policies for the spread of educational effort and improvement of its quality, depending on the initiative of the concerned personnel including the Ministers of Education.

Before reviewing these developments for the period 1921-1936 it would be useful to describe other specific features of the situation as it developed during the period which affected the course of educational developments.

The beginning of twenties was the post-war period of scarcity; sharp price-rise, economic distress and country-wide epidemics — particularly, the influenza epidemic claiming millions of deaths. In spite of the new stirrings and enthusiasm for education, especially for mass education, the above-mentioned difficulties together with the retrenchment policy of the Government prevented adoption of measures for a commensurate expansion and improvement of education.

The ensuing period was also the period of the first wave of militant mass struggle of the National Movement — the Khilafat agitation and the Non-Cooperation Movement — an important programme of which was the call for the boycott of schools and colleges, of institutions of secondary and higher education.⁹ The idea was not only to protest against the 'denationalizing' character of education under British rule but also to urge students to participate in the non-cooperation struggle and help the national awakening and other constructive programmes proposed by the National Congress.

Of all the boycotts invoked by the Non-Cooperation Movement the one of schools and colleges was the most successful. Instead of the normal increase there was a significant drop in the enrolment between 1919-20 and 1921-22¹⁰. There were also attempts by students and staff, and in some cases by managements, to 'nationalize' the existing institutions. Under the leadership of the Ali brothers (Maulana Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali) the Aligarh University was proclaimed to have been 'nationalized'¹¹. And Surat Municipality 'nationalised' all its schools and claimed an increase of enrolment of 4,000 or even 7,500.¹² In the nature of things such 'nationalizations' could not last long, nor did the boycott survive when the Non-cooperation Movement was withdrawn or ebbed out by the beginning of 1922.

Besides the great upheaval the Freedom Struggle produced in the official educational system the movement for 'national education' accomplished at least three things. It brought to the fore the acute dissatisfaction regarding the colonial education system in India including the question of its complete replacement and reconstruction. Even, while underplaying the effect of the boycott of educational institutions, the official agency had to admit this in its characteristic understatement that "...the crisis left behind the conviction that our educational aims need restatement... that it lent strength to the advocates of educational reform".¹³ Moreover, the educational pioneers in the Freedom Struggle actually started a large number of national institutions — like Bihar Vidyapeeth, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Jamia Millia Islamia, and a host of schools and university-level institutions with thousands of students on their rolls in many parts of the country.¹⁴ Although many of them had to fold themselves up in the next few years or join the official system some of them continued on the strength of public support and dedicated self-sacrifice on the part of their faculties. They became active centres for bringing up a veritable phalanx of freedom fighters who participated in the next two waves of mass struggles in the early thirties and the early forties respectively and worked during the intervening periods as social activists in the fields of social work in the rural areas and the uplift of neglected segments of society. Other important spill-overs of this struggle for national education were institutions like Tagore's *Shantiniketan* at Bolpur which shaped themselves on altogether different but parallel lines. Finally, this was also the period of the initial germination of Gandhi's ideas of *Basic Education* which assumed crucial importance in school education in the period of the Provincial Autonomy after 1937 and during the later period before and after Independence. (This will be considered later in greater detail at an appropriate place.)

In this account of the movement for 'national education' we have already alluded to the next two waves of the Freedom Struggle. To complete that account it should be mentioned that there was no attempt to establish institutions of national education during these later struggles although students were called upon to, or did spontaneously, participate in those movements in large numbers. A considerable number of them responded to these calls and to that extent the official educational system temporarily experienced serious jolts in its working.

With the end of post-war (WW I) difficulties, the beginning of economic recovery and withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement there was a rapid expansion of education in the mid-twenties, mainly due to the high level of national and social awakening. But soon it received a setback due to the economic depression of the late twenties and the Great

Depression of the thirties which adversely affected the resources for education. This situation lasted for almost the entire thirties upto the beginning of World War II.

At this stage it is useful to mention two other factors which affected the pace of education during the Dyarchy. On the one hand, since the main political force — the National Congress — was in the opposition the ministers in charge of education (and other transferred departments) lacked the necessary political strength and therefore initiative. The situation altered only after 1937 when under the Provincial Autonomy the National Congress assumed power in seven Provinces, and the Ministers of Education could seriously think of planning systematically for the advance and improvement of education. On the other hand, because of the phenomenal rise in political and social awakening, new social segments were becoming keenly aware of the necessity of having education for personal and group advancement. Women, the rural, middle-caste land-owning sections, the Muslim minority, the depressed classes — the untouchables — and tribals were becoming conscious of their group identities which reflected in their heightened desire for getting education.

Against this general review of the important factors fostering the advance of education in the period 1920-1937 the next section will review the various educational developments in greater detail.

III. Educational Developments during Dyarchy 1920-37

Against the above-mentioned politico-economic factors affecting educational advance during the Dyarchical period 1920-21 to 1936-37 the following figures of enrolment (in thousands) in the four important sectors speak for themselves.

Enrolment in 1921-22 and 1936-37

	1921-22	1936-37	Percentage increase
Arts colleges	45.4	86.3	90
Professional colleges	13.7	20.6	51
Secondary schools	1106.8	2287.9	107
Primary schools	6109.8	10224.3	67

As the Quinquennial Review of Education (for 1932-37) puts it:

“A burst of enthusiasm swept children into school with unparalleled rapidity; parents were prepared to make almost any sacrifice for the education of their children; the seed for tolerance towards the less fortunate in life was begotten; ambitious and com-

prehensive programmes of development were formulated, which were calculated to fulfil the dreams of a literate India: ...enlightened women began to storm the citadel of old-time prejudice against the education of Indian girls; ...with the full concurrence of Legislative Councils large sums of money (were poured out) on education which would have been regarded as beyond the realm of practical politics... previously."¹⁵

It is clear the main reason for this rapid spread of education at all levels was the new political and social awakening accompanying the two waves of Freedom Struggle, in the early twenties and the early thirties, and the corresponding response from the new administrative structure with the elected Indian Minister in charge of education and the involvement of local bodies in the spread of elementary education.

It should not be assumed that all this advance was a smooth sailing or that it was uniform throughout the period. As mentioned in the last section there were ups and downs. During 1917-22 there was post-war financial stringency both for the people and the available governmental resources; moreover, the Non-Cooperation Movement was at its peak. During the next quinquennium the economic distress had disappeared and the political movement had shed its militancy with the result that the educational effort and spread was phenomenal. But it could not be continued during 1927-32 both because of the new economic distress due to the Great Depression and the consequential retrenchment in the educational budget, and the second wave of national struggle — the Civil Disobedience Movement. Although the next quinquennium (1932-37) was a period of recovery the financial crisis still lingered.¹⁶ These zigzags are well reflected, for instance, in the following figures for increase in enrolment in primary schools. 1917-22: 3.55 lakh; 1922-27: 19.08 lakh; 1927-32: 11.44 lakh; and 1932-37: 10.62 lakh.¹⁷

The rate of enrolment increase given in the short table earlier for this period also shows the persistent features of the growth and expansion of Indian education, viz. the rapid increase of secondary and higher education relatively to primary education and of liberal literary (arts colleges) education in the higher education compared to professional and technical education. These are carried over to the post-Independence period as well!

It is interesting to note the verdict of the Hartog Committee's Report (1929) on this phenomenal rise and all-pervading interest in the spread of education. Collecting together all the negative features of the educational situation in India (e.g. wastage, stagnation, low quality of education and of knowledge of English in particular, lack of good teachers and other wherewithals, etc., etc.) the Report severely deprecates the rapid expan-

sion of education and prescribes "concentration on consolidation and improvement" instead of expansion for an indefinite period in the future.¹⁸ Placing it side by side with famous reports like that of the Calcutta University Commission or Quinquennial Reviews on educational progress one is shocked at its lack of depth and historicity, superficiality of understanding and thinness of argument, and perversity of recommendations. To say that it was raising the essay of quality versus quantity, improvement versus expansion is to attach it undue and undeserving importance. It was clearly an essay in the British conservative thinking of the time on education in India to bolster up the general reactionary reasoning of the Simon Commission's Report which, because of the same attitude and (lack of) understanding, never acquired much relevance in the developing Indian situation.

Actually the burst of enthusiasm mentioned above was the expression of widespread, almost universal concern for education in the country. As the Report of the Calcutta University Commission had noted earlier there was a conviction that the country needed more education, more schools and other educational institutions, a conviction that the chief aim should be to democratize knowledge.¹⁹ Even when the government aid and spending had declined considerably this urge for the democratization of education evoked voluntary effort in several districts. For instance, it was in the late twenties and early thirties that the *Rayat Shikshan Sanstha* strove to establish primary (and secondary) schools and hostels, with only austere-bare facilities in Satara and adjoining districts in South Maharashtra. The resources for establishing 'recognized' and 'unrecognized' primary schools were obtained from rural households, often in kind, in the form of foodgrains, in door-to-door collections.

Let us now briefly review the sectorwise development of education during the period of Dyarchy, starting from primary education.

Primary Education

Mass education which means primary education on a wider scale was the national demand over the decade and a half before the Montford Reforms. It is therefore pertinent to see its growth during the Dyarchy (1921 to 1937). The table gives the relevant figures.

	1921-22	1926-27	1931-32	1936-37
Number of recognized primary schools (in thousands)	155.0	184.8	196.7	192.2
Enrolment (in lakhs)	61.10	80.18	91.62	102.24

One can see the sudden spurt during the 1921-22 to 1926-27 period, then a relative slow-down in the next five years, and in the last five years the number of schools actually decreased. The reasons for the phenomenal rise in the earlier period have been described before; the slow-down and the decrease in the number of schools are the result of the Hartog Committee's recommendation of 'consolidation and improvement' which continued the policy of retrenchment in finances adopted in the period of depression.

What about the implementation of compulsory primary education which had been so vigorously advocated by Gokhale and of which a beginning was made by Vithalbhai Patel in 1918? In the initial decade a number of provinces tried to chalk out programmes of expansion. For instance, the Madras Presidency was the first to devote systematic thinking and planning for the purpose and in Bengal a scheme of creating a network of schools was proposed by Biss.²⁰ In Bombay Presidency the Chandavarkar Committee enunciated such a programme. In many provinces the Councils passed compulsory education legislations; the number of areas where it was introduced was rather small. The age-group aimed at was 6 to 10 or 11, and in most cases it was confined to boys only. Moreover, compulsion was tried mainly in a few urban areas, not even in whole cities but only some specific parts of them. Only about 13,000 villages came under these Acts and about 10,500 of them were in Punjab alone!²¹ The implementation was entrusted to local authorities which received financial assistance from the provincial government for the purpose. The legislations had provided penal clauses for action against parents for failure to send their eligible children to school, but, for understandable reasons, the penal provisions were very seldom used. During the thirties, even the slow pace with which compulsion was pursued in the twenties, further slowed down; it would be more correct to say that it petered out.

To sum up this effort on compulsory primary education: it never covered any sizable chunk of school-age children — one estimate was that at that pace it would have taken 500 years to make it universal!²² In the actual areas under compulsion the enrolment rate was of the order of only 60 to 80 per cent and the attendance was hardly better than that in other schools. Moreover, wastage was as bad as, if not worse than, in other schools. On the whole, compulsion started on a very timid note and nothing more laudable could be said about its actual progress.

Apart from the low, almost insignificant, performance of legislations on compulsory primary education, the regular primary system also worked at a low efficiency. For instance, out of the number on the rolls those who attended more or less regularly were often of the order of 65 to 70 per cent and the average daily attendance of the order of 60 per cent.²³ Again in the primary course of four or five standards almost a quarter of the enrolment during the twenties consisted of pupils of age between 10 and 20 years.²⁴ Such a large over-age, heterogeneous group, was bound to add considerably to wastage and retardation. Apart from the large wastage and stagnation, the causes of which are described below, almost fifty per cent of those who left the school after completing primary education, that is, attaining literacy — meaning acquaintance with the three 'R's — lapsed into illiteracy due to its constant exercise, in the absence of suitable reading material in after-life.

The extent of the appalling wastage in primary schools will be clear from the fact that only 28 out of every 100 boys enrolled in class I, and 14 out of every 100 girls could reach class IV during the period 1932-37 and those who passed class IV (and supposed to have become *pucca* literate) were of the order of 18 and 8 respectively.²⁵ And this was an improvement on the situation in the twenties. For, there was a modest improvement over the earlier 15 years when some 20 per cent of the total pupils in class I reached class IV and more than 60 per cent dropped out from class I itself. (These estimates are based on crude retention rates given in the Quinquennial Review for 1922-27)²⁶

The causes of wastage were manifold, but can be broadly classified under two heads: socio-economic, and educational. The main factors under the first were: poverty, need for making children work — boys to help in agricultural, craft or other kinds of men's work and girls to look after the younger children and the household work when the mother was working — social prejudices because of caste, untouchability and general social reluctance, and the *purdah* in the case of girls, and the lack of strong motivation in general. The main educational factors were: low-quality teachers, unsuitable curricula and poor textbooks, anti-diluvian teaching methods (relying more on the cane and the rote), poor buildings and equipment, unsuitable timings and vacations, lack of adequate supervision and distant, one-teacher schools. All these conspired to result in low enrolment, falling attendance, and low retention and stagnation.

It is this general picture which brought grist to the mill of the Hartog Committee (on whose outlook we have commented before) which strongly discouraged expansion of schooling and advocated 'consolidation and improvement'. Naturally there was a bitter controversy over the Commit-

tee's recommendations. But the official sanction was in favour of the Hartog policy which came in handy in the period of depression and financial stringency. The promised improvement, however, did not come about — whether in buildings, equipment, quality of teachers or their salaries. There was a slight increase in the proportion of trained primary teachers but teachers' salary scales actually fell in certain provinces. It was only after the advent of the Provincial Autonomy in 1937 that things began to move in respect of both expansion as well as improvement of the quality of primary education.

An issue of vital importance was the large powers given to local bodies, particularly the District Local Boards, to administer and control primary education. (We have mentioned above one of the motivations of the British Government in this respect.) While this devolution did help the spread of schools, particularly primary education, the almost complete freedom of the local administration from department's control led to many unsatisfactory developments in practice — incompetence, inefficient administration, factional fights, use of teachers for electioneering purposes, inordinate interest in appointments, promotions and transfers of teachers than in initiative for the improvement and spread of education, the resulting nepotism, favouritism and other malpractices including bribes in cash and kind. In some districts the educational administration bordered on chaos.²⁷ Apart from the lack of adequate control and check from the Department an important factor aggravating this state of affairs was that the main national party — the National Congress — was mostly absent from the whole scene, whether as Ministers of Education or in the local bodies. Following the Hartog Committee's many strictures in this respect the educational opinion had started stressing this important question and advocating more control on the local bodies' administration of education. It received greater attention leading to some remedial measures during the next period, after 1937.

Secondary Education

It has been observed in the beginning that the increase in enrolment in the period 1921-22 to 1936-37 was the highest, more than 100 per cent, in secondary education. The number of secondary schools also increased correspondingly from 7,500 to 13,000. (There was, however, a slow-down in the last five years, mainly due to the economic crisis, the enormous fall in the agricultural prices, which seriously affected the rural enrolment.)

What were the causes of this phenomenal rise in secondary education? The main factor was the widespread socio-political awakening due to

the rising intensity of the national movement. The quest for more education now touched the middle social strata, particularly the upper sections of peasantry and other rural population, which now craved for secondary, that is, English education. Socially speaking, education had now started reaching the hitherto backward segments of society — women, middle-castes, and to a smaller extent to the depressed classes (untouchables) and even to tribals. It can be corroborated that the new socio-political rural and semi-urban leadership of the forties and later years emerged from these secondary school-goers.

This inevitably meant establishing secondary schools — which were (and still are) mainly under private management — in smaller towns and some of the bigger villages. Here local patriotism, local social and political leadership, local philanthropy, communal, caste and sectarian organizations came to help. An additional factor was the existence of a sizable number of educated unemployed — was particularly a serious problem during the thirties — some of whom often teamed up to form the nucleus of teachers for starting a new High School. These efforts brought secondary educational nearer the doorstep of the new rural aspirants, and as such Indian Ministers in charge of education appreciated and encouraged this spread of education. It may be stressed here that the preference now was for English Middle Schools — High Schools — over Vernacular Middle Schools which relatively declined in number.²⁸

An important reform in High School education during this period was the change in the medium of instruction and examinations from English to Indian languages. By 1937 almost all subjects for the matriculation examination came to be gradually taught in regional languages. The difficulties of suitable terminology, textbooks, multiple provision for multilingual areas, etc., had to be faced; but they were soon overcome. However, absence of suitable ancillary books in Indian languages at the school stage contributed to the lack of good general reading (and this continues even now).

An allied problem was that of the development of an Indian language for all-India communication. The national movement, at Gandhi's instance, had proposed Hindi-Hindustani as the national language or *Rashtrabhasha*. This gave rise to the nation-wide movement for popularizing and teaching Hindi-Hindustani in many parts of India, of course, outside the official system of education. The UP government, it was mentioned earlier, had taken the lead in replacing English as medium by Indian languages in secondary education; (and the Calcutta University did the same for all subjects except English at its matriculation examination). Now in the early twenties the UP government also took the further initiative of

financing a Hindustani Academy for stimulating the development of Hindi and Urdu languages and literature.

All this, however, did not diminish the existing excessive importance of English in secondary education. "How far there is a real demand for English-knowing men is not easy to determine. Whatever the demand, however, the supply keeps increasing, fed by the general desire ... to better oneself in the social scale and to secure an income for life with perhaps a pension"²⁹ by getting a job preferably in the government service.

While the stress on the use of the English language diminished considerably at the High School stage the medium at the college level still remained English for quite some time — right upto the end of the forties — in most universities. This created a serious hiatus and retained the continued importance of English. This situation also caused difficulties in the teaching at the college and university levels. Some of them remain even now when the large majority of students in most colleges learn in the Indian languages, including the inordinate importance otherwise of the knowledge of English.

The excessive importance of English was largely due to the desire of most students in High Schools to join a college later, the ultimate aim, as mentioned above, being to land a white-collar job preferably in the government. In the early twenties, it was estimated, some 60 per cent of those who matriculated joined college.³⁰ This was often criticised even in those days as "a misdirected effort of a training (in secondary schools) that fits a boy for a college and unfits him for everything else"³¹ including the normal occupations of the country and adds to the growing number of the unemployed and the unemployable.

The liberal-literary character of secondary and college education, the lack of vocational, professional and technical training, and its inadequacy and unsuitability to retain the educated in rural life had been a matter of bitter criticism before and during this period. But this criticism had also been cogently countered by many educationists and educational administrators with the words: "Our high schools are already vocational schools and it is mainly because they prepare pupils for a great market of respectable employment that they are popular."³² (Here respectable employment obviously refers to clerical and other (higher) jobs in the bureaucracy and elsewhere.)

As regards the plea for education suited to rural life (including agriculture and crafts) other educationists argued that it is a misconception that a village school is despised because it is not practical enough. Actually,

they argued, the villager knows that he knows far more about rural occupations including agriculture than the teachers and that he sends his sons to school "because his ambition is that his boy should become a teacher or a clerk."³³ It is clear that in those times these jobs were more remunerative and secure than agriculture and other vocations in the villages.

Again there were many — both British pontificators consisting of report-writers and committee-members, and most Indian critiques of the educational system in British India — who deplored the absence of industrial and commercial education in secondary (and also in higher) education. They naively believed (or were just arguing for the sake of argument) that "commerce and industry must flourish if commerce and industry are taught in schools and that employment must follow". They ignored the reality which experience had demonstrated all over the world that "Commerce and industry do not start at the bidding of academics",³⁴ that actually the sequence is usually the other way round, that these components were absent in education in India precisely because the British rule in India did not want industry and commerce to develop on any large scale except when it became inevitable and, even then, to the extent that it suited them.

In response to these criticisms, however, a few agricultural-bias schools were started in some provinces, and rural science was introduced in village schools in the Punjab. But they were not a success. With regard to the vocational and technical courses in school education and elsewhere a team of two experts, Messrs Wood and Abbot, was invited in 1936 from the UK for advice. They submitted their report in 1937, to which reference will be made when the developments of the decade after 1937 are considered.

The Hartog Committee's review of secondary education made only two important points: diversion of pupils from the literary-liberal courses to industrial, commercial and technical courses; and improvement in the quality and service conditions of the teachers. The first issue has been dealt with above. Regarding the second there was some improvement in the qualifications of teachers during this period in the sense that the number of training colleges increased and the proportion of trained teachers showed some improvement. The service conditions of teachers in these schools, most of which were under private management, were indeed very miserable: low salaries, irregular and/or underpayment, temporary and insecure employment, avoiding payment of salaries for vacations, and in general an overbearing and contemptuous attitude of the managements towards their teacher-employees. The situation obviously needed an

urgent change to create a minimum motivation among the teachers for good teaching. But such a change had to await many more years, the thirties being a decade of economic depression and hence of severe unemployment and low pay-scales for the large majority of the matriculates and graduates.

Higher Education

In higher education — the Universities and Colleges — also the increase in enrolment was very high, about 90 per cent in arts colleges, during this period of the Dyarchy. If we take all the colleges and university departments their number rose from 207 to 446, and enrolment from 66 thousand to 126 thousand — an increase of 90 per cent. Thus the rise both in institutions and students was indeed phenomenal. It should be remembered, however, that there were zigzags depending on the situation, particularly the political movement and the economic crisis. To give just one instance the number of students reading law went down during 1932-37, probably both because of the general recession and the fact that the profession had become overcrowded.³⁵ The employment prospects of agricultural students were also no better ³⁶ — it has to be remembered that most of them preferred government service to practising agriculture. If this was the situation of professional students one could imagine the plight of students taking general, liberal-literary education, that is, studying in Arts Colleges.

How does one explain the galloping increase in the enrolment in higher education in spite of the lean employment prospects? The forces are too complex for analysis, but the major factors appeared to be: "ever-increasing appreciation of the cultural value of university education, the social advantages of higher education, the absence of any avenues for high-grade technical training and employment after the matriculation stage, (and) the persistence of the old belief in the ultimate relation of university degrees to public service..."³⁷ In Bengal, the most highly educated province in higher education, the situation was simply tragic: "While the problem of the educated unemployed is becoming increasingly acute, the university is flooding the province with an ever-growing number of young men who are not only unemployed but also often unemployable."³⁸

What were the remedies suggested by the Hartog Report? They were mainly two: the separation of the degree from the job by the government and holding its own Civil Service Examination; and provision of technical training facilities. The futility of the second, as mentioned before, was in-built in the situation where there were not many industries to absorb them.

The first was also a non-starter because it would have closed the only hope for employment and provoked widespread discontent and, anyway, what did the Government lose by continuing the existing situation?

Let us now briefly refer to other significant developments in higher education during the period. First, some five new Universities were incorporated: Delhi, Nagpur, Agra, Andhra and Annamalai; two of them should be noted for special reasons. The last was a unitary university established at Chidambaram in Madras Presidency and named after its munificent donor Sir Annamalai Chettiar. The Andhra University (at Waltair), an affiliating university, was established to serve the Telugu-speaking region of the Presidency, thus recognizing the principle that each sizable linguistic region should be served by its own University. Both these Universities had also included the development of the regional languages, Tamil and Telugu respectively, among their objectives.

Second, some more teaching departments were developed in the Universities to follow the principle, long recognized, that Universities should be centres of advanced learning and research. The Calcutta University Commission's Report had in fact expressly stated this objective for that University. That University did carry it out to a large extent; others followed at a modest pace. Some of these university departments were served by distinguished Indian scholars of the day. As a necessary accompaniment university libraries were developed in a substantial manner.

Third, following the recommendation of the Calcutta University Commission Report emphasizing the need for the coordination of the work of Indian Universities the first All-India Conference of Universities was held at Simla in 1924. As a result of its deliberations the Inter-University Board was established in 1925, and it continues to this day in the form of the Association of Indian Universities (although the directional and coordinating roles are now mainly discharged by the University Grants Commission, since the mid-fifties).

Finally, the rise and the fall of the so-called Intermediate Colleges recommended by the Calcutta University Commission. It will be remembered that the Commission had recommended a ten-year school course, followed by a two-year higher secondary course in the Intermediate Colleges — institutions separate from the degree colleges — followed by a three-year course in the Degree Colleges for a general degree in arts or science. The newly established Dacca University followed this pattern. Some other Universities were also inclined in the beginning to adopt the enabling provisions for following this pattern. But the actual turn of events was quite different.

In actual practice only the universities in the UP, and the provinces of the Punjab and Bihar to some extent, gave a trial to the proposal of the Intermediate Colleges. But even here the degree course was not extended from the existing two to the proposed three years. But they did establish Intermediate Colleges controlled by the Board of Intermediate Examination. After initial enthusiasm, not very overwhelming, academic opinion soon began to veer round to the continuation of the prevailing pattern. The main inhibiting factors were: the lengthening of the degree course from four to five years and the inadequacy of finances. Universities, as well as the Colleges which very often controlled them, were not in favour of extending the degree course to three years. Moreover, the separation of the two-year Intermediate course would have seriously depleted the incomes of both the Universities and Colleges; the former would lose the handsome amount of fee-income yielded by holding Intermediate examinations; and the latter would lose the substantial fee incomes from the students of the first two years of college which in fact enabled them to run the relatively smaller degree classes. The suggestion mooted by the C.A.B.E. suggesting a compromise to transfer the first year of the Intermediate Course to High Schools and to retain the second year in degree courses also did not find favour with either the Colleges or the Universities. In this predicament the idea of Intermediate Colleges was given up except in the UP which held the fort for several decades right upto the first half of the post-Independence period.

Miscellaneous

In this short subsection some notable miscellaneous developments in education during 1921-1937 will be briefly touched upon as some of them have a bearing on the next period, and even on the present day.

First, although there was a growing concern about mass education including compulsory primary education there was no appreciable effort about its concomitant, viz., adult education. This was initiated on an appreciable scale only in the next phase.

Second, in spite of the opening of a few departments or institutes of technical education, such training facilities were indeed meagre. Hundreds of students went abroad for advanced engineering and technological education, some of them with scholarships awarded by the Government for this purpose. Generally speaking, however, in the absence of industrial development on an appreciable scale it was futile to expect many such institutions, if established, to grow.

Third, European and Anglo-Indian schools had already started ad-

mitting Indian students. By the mid-twenties (1927) their proportion in such schools in different provinces varied between 8 and 35 per cent.³⁹ This class of students went on increasing and could be clearly seen as the precursor of the present-day English-educated 'super' elites.⁴⁰

Finally, although the Montford Reforms had hardly left any significant educational role or activity to the Centre the popular representatives did try to pursue problems related to education in the Central Legislature. For instance, they passed a resolution in 1936 recommending urgent, effective steps for the removal of mass illiteracy; in another resolution they showed their anxious concern for the educated unemployed which plagued the younger generation during that period and urged the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Sapru Committee on Unemployment appointed by the United Province Government.⁴¹

IV. Education of the Underprivileged

In this section we shall briefly deal with the educational advance during this period of some important social segments which are relatively more backward: in particular women, the Muslims, the depressed classes (*untouchables*) and *tribals*. The reason for describing them in rather greater details is to reveal the decades-old roots of the problems we are facing in these respects even now.

Women

In the many inequities from which women suffer in any society, and particularly in one which is emerging from its traditional structure and culture, there are two kinds of suppressions of women inherent in the situation: first, the pressures due to the overwhelmingly male-dominated social tradition; second, the pressures originating from the religion, caste, clan and class to which the women belong. Although we are not going to expatiate much on these points in this account, they should always be in one's mind when dealing with the problems of women.⁴²

The backwardness of female education before the Montford Reforms is reflected in the female literacy figures noted earlier (in Section I). In spite of separate schools, *Zenana* schools, and other efforts to encourage girls' education it did not pick up—the enrolment in the early twenties being about one per cent of the total female population when it was usually about 14 per cent in most modern countries. Moreover, some 88 per cent of the enrolment was in primary schools of which 40 per cent could not even read. Those who reached secondary or higher education (or became teachers) were indeed very few and they were mostly from the peripheral segments of society—Anglo-Indians,

Christians, Parsees, abandoned or widowed women in general society, etc. Female education was caught up in a vicious circle: little female education because of lack of women teachers and the latter because of lack of female education! It used to be said that "Female education is carried on in response to demand which does not exist."⁴³ The walls of social prejudice had still to be removed except in a tiny section of upper-class, upper-caste families where female education was pursued for better marriage prospects and in certain sections for employment as teachers.⁴⁴ Indian public opinion, however, slowly started changing from its former hostile attitude through apathy to willing cooperation.⁴⁵

The national and social awakening resulting from the first wave of national struggle in the early twenties had a profound effect in this respect. In the next five years much concern was felt about women's education and their status in society.⁴⁶ Various women's conferences on education during these years culminated in the All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform at Poona in 1927 and emphatically voiced the urgent demands for the education of girls and women. In her welcome speech the chairwoman of the reception committee said: "There was a time when the education of girls had not only no supporters but had open enemies... Female education has by now gone through all stages—total apathy and indifference, ridicule, criticism and acceptance... the need of education of girls as much as for boys is now recognized... as a *sine qua non* of national advancement."⁴⁷ A special Women's Advisory Committee was appointed for the purpose.

Indian ministers in charge of education were also a definite help in the advance of female education. Enrolment and institutions increased much more rapidly during 1922-27 than ever before. And yet co-education had not yet struck roots, to the necessary extent, particularly in secondary schools. And the wastage among girls at the primary stage was appalling: Only one-tenth of those joining class I could reach class IV, that is, become literate.⁴⁸ Those entering secondary schools were indeed much fewer. Moreover, only 1,600 girls were in Arts Colleges and a large number of them was from the peripheral social segments.

The burst of enthusiasm which resulted in a phenomenal rise in school enrolment — including that of girls — during 1927-32 has already been mentioned earlier (in Section III). This advance continued, at a moderate pace at the primary level, during the period upto 1937, but at a more rapid pace in secondary and higher education. For instance, the number of girls in Arts Colleges increased from about 2,900 to over 6,000 during 1932-37; it more than doubled. Middle class families had become conscious of the social need for their girls' education, and many of the girl students

wanted to pursue professional education, e.g., as teachers and doctors. The Sarda Act of the early thirties, prohibiting child marriages, at least legally if not in practice, had also a desirable effect. But the main lever of change was the enhanced social consciousness of the rising middle class. Thus by 1937 the education of girls had almost become accepted by at least the relatively advanced segments of society.

Muslims

Like every other segment of Indian population Muslims were also becoming conscious and assertive during this period both of their self-identity as the largest minority — about 24 per cent — and of the need for the acquisition of education. But they had peculiar difficulties of their own. The main difficulty was their general aversion to the official system of modern education, which was essentially secular in character, and strong attachment to the indigenous religion-based education. Most of the Muslim children seeking education received instruction in reciting *Quran* in Arabic — not in their own regional language or mother-tongue but in Arabic—in the Mullah-run *Maktabas* for almost two years. This, of course, they did without understanding what they were learning. Moreover, except in the provinces like Bengal, Kerala, and other regions the traditional pressures combined with the more recent consciousness of preserving or/and asserting their self-identity, to insist on a demand to have (separate) Urdu schools for Muslims irrespective of the regional language which was also their natural mother-tongue. The idea was that the Urdu script would enable them to learn by rote the *Quran* in Arabic which has a closely similar script and also foster a separate all-India religious identity. Thus the traditional and newer Muslim elites both had created formidable difficulties against the spread of education amongst their children who had to spend two of their most impressionable years away from the main stream of modern secular education. The Muslim child going through this process no doubt ultimately became a polyglot — knowing a smattering of Arabic together with the regional language, Urdu and ultimately English, if it advanced to secondary education — but it seriously suffered a general educational handicap.⁴⁹ (We have described this situation in some detail because a similar tendency survives among sections of Muslims even to this day.) Thus Muslims, in addition to the official common schools, also had two kinds of segregate schools: 'special' schools like traditional *Maktabas* (and later *Madrasahs* for advanced religious education) and 'separate' Urdu schools in non-Urdu speaking areas, that is most of India. In a sense, from the standpoint of secular educational advance, both meant a handicap.

In spite of these situational difficulties the Muslim's progress of education during the period of Dyarchy was quite commendable and the Quinquen-

nial Reviews (QR) for the period show even a relative edge over the general population in terms of the *total* enrolment which was more than 24 per cent. Of course there were variations from one province to another. But the main element of backwardness lay in the fact that about 80 per cent of this enrolment was in primary schools and suffered from heavy wastage and stagnation. As the Muslim pupils proceeded upwards on the educational ladder to secondary and higher education their number declined rapidly in comparison with the non-Muslim population. But even here the QRs for the period 1921-1937 show quite some advance, particularly in provinces where the Muslims were not almost entirely in agrarian occupations as in Bengal, Assam and Bihar. Although Muslim girls were generally much more backward because of the prevalence of the *purdah*, in some provinces they showed a relatively greater advance.⁵⁰

Muslims had a number of educational demands during the period: Teaching of and in Urdu, and Urdu schools (in non-Urdu areas), reservations among teachers and inspectors, and admissions to certain institutions, representation in local authorities, and incentives like freeships, scholarships, etc. As was the general governmental policy during the period many of them were liberally met; even the *Mullahs* were helped to be trained in Sind.⁵¹

We may conclude this account by referring to the QR for 1932-37 in this respect which states that rapid progress was made by the Muslim pupils.⁵² It concludes: "On the whole, the prospect for the education of Muslims is bright... that throughout India the number of Muslim pupils is on the increase." Nonetheless one should also note the following observations showing clearly their peculiar grievances (and perhaps also reflecting the British Government's ruling attitude towards them). "The Muslim community, however, or a certain section of it, still regards the absence of any provision for religious instruction in the ordinary schools as a deterrent factor." The Bengal Report, quoted in this QR, goes further saying that "the politically conscious section of the Muslims feels — not without some justification — that there is a danger of Muslim boys losing their individual outlook if they attend general schools which are manned largely (in some places exclusively) by non-Muslims and where the education given is more or less non-Islamic (*Sic Hindu!*) in character."⁵³ This apprehension may well be a genuine feeling in that section.

We have quoted this *in extenso* to show how the emerging consciousness of self-identity worked in that period among the Muslims, especially when the British rulers were prepared to foster even the unhealthy aspects in it. Second, even now in the eighties, after 35 years after partition, these grievances remain in the minds of the conservative sections of Indian Muslims.

The Depressed Classes

During this and the preceding period the Depressed Classes (DC) actually connoted the untouchables in the Hindu society, suffering from all kinds of invidious, cruel segregation from the Caste-Hindu (*Savarna*) society on grounds of pollution by contact, shadow or even mere presence. They were sizable in number, almost a fifth of the (entire) Hindu society. Inevitably, although the British rule, formally recognized everyone as equal before law and also for entrance to educational institutions in the official system, in practice the DC children experienced severe, often insurmountable, hardships also on this score even in governmental and aided schools and other educational institutions. Their socio-political struggle for education had started almost since the inception of English education as an organized system after Wood's famous despatch of 1854. In 1856 a case of denial of admission in school to two DC boys was represented for justice to the Government of the Bombay Presidency and thence to the Imperial Government at Calcutta. Since then it has been a long haul upto the period of Dyarchy to bring the DC children into the portals of education, the hurdles being not only the untouchability but also their dire poverty. Special measures were devised for this purpose including freeships, scholarships, provision of books, opening of 'special', that is, separate schools (since the non-DC teachers were reluctant to teach them in common schools), training of the DC teachers to man these schools as well as to join the common schools, and special inspecting staff. Besides these official measures, it must be conceded, yeoman service was done by the Christian missionaries ever since the 1840s, and following them later by Hindu social reformers. Some enlightened rulers of princely states (e.g. Baroda and Kolhapur in the Bombay Presidency) had shown considerable initiative and enterprise to encourage the DC education.⁵⁴

By the end of World War I and the sweep of socio-political awakening during the twenties onwards two powerful forces entered the field of the educational and other awakening of the DCs: Gandhi's *Harijan* movement operating in collaboration with the National Congress; and independent efforts of self-assertive leaders like Ambedkar of the untouchables themselves building and asserting their separate self-identity. Under this two-pronged attack, and aided by the special measures mentioned above to which some more added, the cause of the DC education received considerable impetus during the regime of Indian ministers in charge of education. This can be seen from the Quinquennial Reviews for the period 1921-1937. One finds even a suggestion in one of them to compensate the parents themselves financially so that some of the promising DC

students could be enabled to continue their education further instead of prematurely dropping out to take up work.⁵⁵

There was now increasing attendance of the DC children in the common schools and the total DC enrolment started increasing at quite some pace. During the thirties, particularly when both the above-mentioned movements acquired considerable momentum, there was notable improvement in the situation. A demand began to be voiced that the segregated schools — never particularly efficient — should be closed down. (This was done during the later decade during the period of Provincial Autonomy.)

By the thirties lakhs of DC pupils were enrolled but this advance had three obvious shortcomings: First, most of the enrolment was in primary classes and the percentage of girls was extremely low; second, it was dogged with very high wastage and stagnation for obvious reasons; the number of students in high schools was very small, and that in colleges even smaller. But from this last was emerging the new leadership — the DC's own leadership with a promise for further educational and social advance.

Tribals

Another very backward social segment in general (except certain specific areas in Bihar and Chhota Nagpur, and North East Frontier regions where the Christian missionaries had been working for more than eighty years until the advent of Montford Reforms) were the tribals. The tribal population in India amounted to almost one-tenth of the entire non-Muslim population and was therefore one of its important segments. Here the problem was not of segregation due to untouchability but due to geographical isolation and traditional tribal modes of living.

As in the case of the DCs the pioneers in the spread of modern education and of social advance towards modernity among the tribals were the missionaries. Indian social reformers were rather late arrivals, their major effort started under the inspiration of Gandhi and following the beginning of the mass phase of national movement during the late twenties and the thirties. This was necessarily accompanied by the educational effort — starting of schools and *ashramshalas*, that is, hostel-schools. (Here again the Chief of Baroda was an eminent pioneer).

During this period 1921-1937, educational institutions — schools — in tribal areas and the enrolment of tribal students went on increasing although one does not find a systematic record of educational statistics pertaining to tribals in the relevant QRs. Reliable consolidated data in this case

become available only after 1937, with the implementation of the Government of India Act, 1935, which named the tribals as the Scheduled Tribes (and the DCs as the Scheduled Castes).

But the educational situation of the tribals had some similarities with that of the DCs, *viz.*, special measures including hostel-schools, etc., the overwhelming number in the enrolment in primary education, backwardness of girls' education (except in certain missionary-activated regions), a very modest core of pupils in high schools and colleges, and so on. However, under the impact of education a new leadership was emerging also among the tribals, asserting their new awareness and self-identity. A large part of them had come from the missionary institutions but there was also a sizable group amongst them under the influence of Indian social reformers, including the National Congress workers.

V. Education during the last decade of the British Rule

In this and the following sections will be reviewed the important educational developments of the last decade of the British rule, 1937 to 1947. Earlier we have dealt with the new phase of rapid expansion of and intense concern for education during 1921-1937. Its most important features were: the subject of education in the hands of Indian Ministers in Provinces and devolution of primary education further down to the local authorities; the great socio-political awakening leading to educational awakening among the hitherto backward segments of society; and the entry of the middle urban and rural strata; particularly the land-owning middle-caste segments, into education including its secondary and higher stages. This expansion and growth had taken place in spite of the severe constraint of public finances — the government expenditure had remained almost stationary, or even decreased, between 1921 and 1936, together with retrenchments and salary cuts — the popular leadership, local philanthropists, low-paid teachers and above all the parents had borne the brunt of the increased financial requirements of education.⁵⁶

A new period began in 1937 with the advent of what was called Provincial Autonomy — cabinet-style administration of most provincial matters in the hands of the ministries formed by the Provincial legislatures headed by the Governors. This was in accordance with the Government of India Act, 1935, which had (i) a Federal structure which never came into force, and which was replaced by an *ad hoc* Central set up after the transfer of power in 1947, and (ii) the above-mentioned Provincial Autonomy. Most of the matters pertaining to education were with the Provinces and with almost all provincial subjects managed by Indian ministers education was hoped to get a much better deal than before including the period of

Dyarchy until 1937. This hope was enhanced because the leaders of the freedom movement — led by the National Congress — accepted power in seven provinces in 1937.

The situation, however, rapidly changed due to national and international developments in the next ten years. The Second World War started in August 1939, and as India was dragged into it just by a viceregal fiat without consulting the Congress, the Congress ministries resigned office towards the end of 1939 after 27 months of rule in the provinces. In the period 1940-45 the Congress was in the wilderness, first in a 'phony' struggle until August 1942 and in an active, countrywide Quit-India revolt thereafter. The movement was withdrawn by Gandhi in 1944 and the Congress ministries returned to power in early 1946 and remained there until after Independence in 1947, upto 1952, when the first general elections were held under the Republican Constitution of Independent India in 1952. Thus, the ministries, including those of education, were in popular hands initially for a brief period of 27 months and for about 18 months before Independence under the Provincial Autonomy of the Government of India Act, 1935. In the intervening period 1940-1945 education was under the Governor's rule. As described in the chapter on political development, momentous changes took place in the period from 1939 leading to the attainment of Independence after the partition of the country in August 1947.

In the following we shall first take a brief review of the broad educational developments: (i) mass education including primary and adult education, (ii) secondary education, (iii) higher education, (iv) educational advance of some specific social segments, and (v) miscellaneous matters of importance. Then we shall deal in some detail with two themes of fundamental educational significance; (a) Basic Education, and (b) Post-war Educational Plan(s).

(i) Mass Education

The popular ministries started with the objective of establishing additional schools particularly in schoolless villages and girls' schools, inevitably with additional teachers and additional finances. They tried to extend the areas under compulsion but except in Bombay and Punjab (and that too mostly during 1946-57) this effort was extremely unsatisfactory. Consequently, primary education registered insubstantial progress as will be seen from the figures in the table on the next page.⁵⁷

While interpreting these figures a few things should be taken into account: the figures in the first two rows are for undivided British India and those in the third are for Indian territory after partition; the intervening

Advance in Primary Education 1937-47

	No. of schools	Pupils (in lakhs)
1936-37	192,244	102.24
1945-46	167,700	130.27
1946-47	134,866	105.26

years were years of turmoil, due to political struggle and violent communal clashes; in this period the Governor's regimes continued the educational policies of 1939 but without much initiative or enthusiasm their sole objective being the prosecution of the War; the number of schools actually decreased (shades of Hartog!) and whatever advance that was registered in enrolment actually occurred in the period 1946 onwards, in the provinces relatively less affected by communal tension. Another significant fact was that some 44 per cent of Primary Schools were in private hands, that is 'recognized' schools, not belonging to the government or local bodies. This slow progress of primary, and in general elementary education clearly indicated that in the matter of universalization of primary education there was really no alternative to the introduction of free and compulsory primary education for all.

What were the changes or improvements brought about in the primary educational system? First, following the unsatisfactory experience over the administration by local bodies their powers were substantially curtailed bringing the initiative in primary education to the Minister and the Department. Second, the question of very low salaries — even less than that of a *chaprasi*⁵⁸ — came to the fore, especially, in the period of rising prices during and after the War. Actually the Bombay Province witnessed in 1946 the first (almost complete) strike of primary teachers — even the proverbial worm had turned. This led to upgrading of teachers' salaries which, however, was wiped off immediately later by the further price-rise. The third and the most important change was the introduction of *Basic Education* in schools which will be separately considered later in greater detail, pointing out its significance. *

Since the main objective of the rapid spread of primary education was speedy removal of illiteracy the other prong of the attack, *viz.*, adult education clearly needed attention. One very important contribution of the popular — the Congress — ministries was the push given to adult education. This meant not only increase of enrolment in adult education classes but also a serious consideration of its content. The C.A.B.E. (The Central

* In the series of studies on Educational Reform in India, brought out by the Indian Institute of Education, Volume II also deals with the reform of Basic Education. — Editor

Advisory Board of Education) appointed for this purpose a Committee headed by Dr. Syed Mahmud, the Education Minister in Bihar, in 1939. The Committee recognized that without literacy "there can be no politics — only rumours, gossip, tales, superstitions".⁵⁹ It was therefore proposed to have two aims: the acquisition by the adult of the three 'R's or conventional literacy and, in addition, acquisition also of knowledge related to his working life and to citizenship. Several provinces started adult education on quite an appreciable scale in 1937-38 with the willing cooperation of voluntary agencies. The Bombay Province led others in this respect, particularly with its extensive adult literacy work in the Bombay city. The effort, however, encountered a setback in 1940 when the ministries resigned and was somewhat revived later in 1946 when the ministries resumed office

How far did all these drives in primary education and adult education, albeit for short periods, achieve in terms of literacy? The following literacy figures show both the progress and its shortcomings: 1931: 9.5 per cent, 1941: 16.1 per cent and 1951: 16.7 per cent (see table given below). And in view of the rising population the absolute number of illiterates actually increased!

Literacy Percentage in India by Sex 1881-1981

Census year*	Males	Females	Total
1881	9.0	0.4	4.8
1891	10.4	0.5	5.6
1901	9.8	0.6	5.3
1911	10.6	1.1	5.9
1921	12.2	1.8	7.2
1931	15.6	2.9	9.5
1941	24.9	7.3	16.1
1951	24.9	7.9	16.7
1961	34.4	13.0	24.0
1971	39.5	18.4	29.3
1981	46.7	24.9	35.2

Note: Pre-1951 figures relate to British India; the last line is added from the 1981 Census results.

Source: *The Population of India*, CICRED Series, Ministry of Home Affairs, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, New Delhi, 1974, p. 64.

(ii) Secondary Education

The advance of secondary education, like that of primary education, had also relatively slowed down. Using the estimates made by Naik and Nurullah for 1936-37 (for the territory which later constituted Independent

India) in this decade (1936-37 to 1946-47) Secondary Schools increased from 10,400 to about 11,900 and the enrolment in them from 18.30 lakh to 26.82 lakh (by 45 per cent). Two factors must have contributed for this relative slow-down: economic hardships and the turbulent period of the forties, and the relatively slow growth of primary enrolment which ultimately feeds the Secondary Schools. And yet it must be said the process of the former period, of reaching down to the middle and lower strata, continued. Moreover, the same old problems, viz., effects of selective spread, selective admissions occasionally backed by freeships and scholarships for the deserving needy pupils, and vocational and professional education continued unattended.

For the last, Wood and Abbot Committee was appointed in 1936; it submitted its report in 1937. But the War had started before the Provinces could implement its recommendations. But the very requirements of war-time economy stimulated the growth of Indian industries which in turn necessitated such training courses. Thus between 1937 and 1947 the provincial Governments did start some technical, commercial and agricultural secondary schools. The trend continued after the War when the country launched further industrialization.

The change-over to Indian languages as media of instruction over the entire secondary course was consummated by 1947. The problems of terminology were solved and a number of quality textbooks became available in Indian languages. The problem to be faced and solved now was to carry it further to the higher education — in the Colleges and Universities. This necessarily brought forth and underlined the question of a common language for the whole country, the *Rashtrabhasha* or National Language.

The number of Training Colleges and the proportion of trained teachers also showed an advance. An even more remarkable thing was the larger recruitment of women teachers to the profession. And the salary scales were improved, an improvement which soon got negated by galloping prices.

(iii) Higher Education

As in the earlier period, during this period of only ten years also, the enrolment in higher education increased rapidly, from 1.26 lakh (for undivided India) in 1936-37 to 2.42 lakh (for India after partition) in 1946-47, a remarkable growth indeed.⁶⁰ What were the reasons for this unprecedented advance? In addition to greater and wider national awakening the other reasons were the war-time boom in jobs and the fact

that higher education was now covering social segments like women, urban and rural youth coming from the middle and lower rural strata to a much larger extent, including small numbers from the SC and ST. This growth later accentuated the problems of higher education: much larger numbers than needed in liberal-literary education; relatively much less facilities, enrolment and turnover in scientific, technological and professional education; non-selective admissions; and very few facilities by way of scholarships and freeships for poor, deserving students hailing from backward segments of society. This latter preserved the character of higher education as a more or less a middle and upper class prerogative, despite the large expansion in enrolment.

It is perhaps worth dealing here with the characterization of higher education (then and also now) as top-heavy in the sense of both numbers in and resources spent on the respective stages. Actually a population-wise comparison with other (advanced) countries shows that this was (and is) far from true. But it is certainly true relative to the rather narrow coverage of mass education, that is, a good elementary education. We have mentioned this here because the problem persists in the post-independence period.

An important question, a precursor of the problem to come up in the later period, was that of the medium of instruction in higher education. The CABE had endorsed in 1944 the resolution passed by the Conference of Indian universities "that modern Indian languages be recognized gradually, and as far as possible alternatively with English, as media of instruction for Intermediate and Degree courses... and if necessary for Science subjects". The BHU had already allowed students to take their Intermediate, B.A., B.Sc., and B.T. examinations in Indian languages (Hindi) and the Lucknow University recognized Hindi and Urdu for this purpose in 1946. Nagpur and Patna had plans to do so from 1947.⁶¹ So this question was now firmly on the agenda and as secondary school leavers taught in Indian languages were now flooding higher education it had to be squarely faced by the concerned authorities.

It was realized that salary structures of teachers in the universities and colleges was very uneven and very low and their conditions of service generally poor in general. The CABE Committee expressed that "All educational reform must begin with the teachers and their conditions of service."⁶² Not much, however, was done in this respect until many years thereafter.

The need for technological education, particularly at the advanced level, was urgently felt both during, and after the War for post-war

reconstruction and industrialization. An All-India Council of Technical Education was established in 1945. It was also recommended to have an institute of advanced technology on the lines of Massachusetts Institute — clearly anticipating the establishment of Indian Institutes of Technology later.⁶³ A Scientific Manpower Committee was also appointed in 1947 which later developed into a regular institute for this purpose after Independence.

A tendency of upgrading higher education was evident. For instance licentiate courses in medicine were abolished in some provinces in favour of the degree courses, a trend which became a rule later.

(vi) Education of the Weaker Social Segments

The same trend of advance, described for the 1921-1937 period, continued after 1937. So it is not necessary to deal with it in greater detail beyond pointing out the outstanding specifics of the period for each of the weaker segments.

(a) *Women*: Large segments of people, particularly the middle strata, had now become more interested in girls' education. It is noted above that the progress of primary education was slow or stagnated during this decade. But women's literacy rose from 2.9 in 1931 to 7.3 per cent in 1941 — a tribute to the new national consciousness and serious efforts in this respect — but slowed down in the next ten years since it rose to only 7.9 in 1951. This may be contrasted with the figures for male literacy, viz., 1931: 15.6, 1941: 24.9 and 1951: 24.9. There was, however, much greater advance in the female education at the secondary and higher levels. This was both due to the increased awakening as well as to the opening out of war-time employment opportunities for educated women and the acute need felt by middle class on account of galloping price-rise for searching avenues to supplement the family resources.⁶⁴

(b) *Muslims*: Muslim education must have advanced further along the lines described earlier. (Separate figures are not available for this period, and certainly not for post-Independence period.) But it is well known that all the special concessions for the education of the Muslim minority — special (Urdu) schools, scholarships, fee concessions, reservations in jobs, etc. — continued, in some provinces even in a more enhanced form. The period after 1940, however, was marked by increasing communal tension and fearful riots which became even more exacerbated in 1946-47. The partition meant a great hiatus and trauma for the education of Muslims who remained in the new state of India — not a small number, about one-ninth of the population — their special status having been shorn of the

many favours which the British rulers had showered on them as a part of their imperial strategy. The government of Independent India, however, did recognize their educational rights on par with other religious minorities and even continued special concessions which, however, were now available only to the backward communities amongst them.

(V) The Depressed Classes and Tribals

The Government of India Act, 1935, specified these two segments of population more clearly by enumerating the relevant castes and tribes in the respective Schedules. Henceforward they came to be known as the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST) respectively. The Republican Constitution of Independent India retained both the Schedules and the nomenclature. Many more efforts were made during the Provincial Autonomy period for advancing the progress of education among these communities: 'separate' schools were discontinued and it was decided that the regular common schools should admit the SC (the former untouchables) pupils on an equal footing. (It is not difficult to guess how far this rule was enforced in practice.) Further, measures were taken in the form of freeships, increased stipends and scholarships, hostels, and Ashramshalas for the ST, etc. In 1944-45 post-matriculate scholarships were instituted for the SC/ST by the Central Government. The number of such scholars, 114 in 1944-45, went on increasing.⁶⁵ Moreover, provision of scholarships was also made for the study of some selected SC/ST scholars abroad. The Government of Independent India pursued these programmes with great vigour and these privileges were enshrined in the Constitution. These developments were greatly helped by the presence of Ambedkar in the Viceroy's Executive Council in the early forties and later in the Constituent Assembly and its Drafting Committee. Many well known figures belonging to the SC, and Ambedkar in particular, gave a push to their education by founding a number of collegiate institutions, the latter in Maharashtra.

(VI) Miscellaneous

The other significant developments in education during the period will now be briefly mentioned.

One significant departure was the establishment of an independent separate Department of Education in the Central Government in 1945 which meant a long awaited recognition of the role that the Centre can usefully play in education.

Many other innovations and reforms were suggested and even carried out. For instance, it was recommended in 1945-46 to appoint a University Grants Committee, clearly anticipating the appointment of the UGC founded in the fifties. A substantial scheme of Overseas Scholarships was mooted and carried out — during 1945-47 over 600 scholars were sent abroad for advanced learning and training under the Central Scheme and almost an equal number under the Provincial Schemes.⁶⁶ Most of them went to the UK or the USA and a large number of them for technological studies.

The CABE was quite active during this period through discussions, recommendations and committees. The more important themes and subjects were: (a) Basic Education, (b) Adult Education, and (c) Consideration of the Memorandum on Post-War Educational Development in India. This report prepared in 1943-44 by Sargent (and which is often called Sargent Report) was approved by the Government of India in 1945. This last theme indicates that planning of educational advance had assumed great importance both in official and non-official circles. It meant that by this time, and even earlier, it was becoming more and more clear politically that India would emerge as an independent State after the World War, in any case not before long.

The following two sections will deal in greater detail with Basic Education and the Post-War Plan of Educational Development mentioned above.

VII. Basic Education

Educationally the most important development of the period which to some extent spilled over to the post-1947 period as well was Gandhi's scheme of *Basic Education*. When the Congress ministries came to power in 1937 they had a mandate, in a sense, to adopt a National System of Education — a continuing demand of the Freedom Struggle — an important component of which was compulsory primary schooling for a period of six to eight years. For implementing this promise Gandhi suggested a scheme whose main elements were: (i) free and compulsory education for at least seven years which will have a standard of the matriculation course minus English, (ii) mother tongue as the medium, and (iii) education centred around a craft (e.g. spinning, weaving, woodwork, agriculture, etc.) related to the actual life and work of the people and which would not only enable them to make a living in later life but also more or less cover the current expenses (e.g. teacher's salary) of the schooling. These ideas were broadcast by Gandhi in a series of articles in *Harijan* (weekly) in 1937 and they were later developed into what was called the *Wardha Scheme of Basic Education*.

Two points should be made right away. First, education woven around activity, preferably productive activity, was (and still is) a recognized pedagogic principle for several decades before although Gandhi, according to his own statements, had seen it, on his own, "through the glass darkly for the past 40 years" and had now (in 1937) "come upon me like a flash, and the truth of it is daily growing upon him".⁶⁷ (For the present purpose this revelation part of it may be best ignored.) Second, it was then believed that Gandhi's incorporation of the principle of self-support or self-finance was mainly due to the situation that the choice then before the Congress ministries was between forgoing prohibition (which implied losing substantial revenues) or adopting universalization of primary education for which no resources could be otherwise raised. Gandhians soon asserted that it was not this financial dilemma which made them advocate the self-financing part of the principle but the basic importance of relevant productive activity in the educational process itself.

A conference, held at Wardha in October 1937 and presided over by Gandhi, to thrash out the issues, endorsed the principles of Basic Education described above. In particular they elucidated the crucial point in the following words: "the process of education throughout this period (for schooling) should centre around some form of manual productive work, and... be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child" and further that "this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers".⁶⁸

The Zakir Hussain Committee, appointed by the Wardha Conference, gave a revised, well-thought-out elaboration of these ideas from the educational standpoint. The Committee pointed out that "modern educational thought is practically unanimous... (about) educating children through some suitable form of productive work", emphasized the educative aspect of the craft which "should inspire the method of teaching all other subjects", and that the ideal of citizenship — dignity of work, "the desire for self-improvement and social service in a cooperative community" — were implicit in the scheme. About the self-supporting aspect the Committee was more guarded in expression as will be seen from its following formulations. "Even if it is not 'self-supporting' in any sense, it should be accepted as a matter of sound educational policy and as an urgent measure of national reconstruction." And yet it was not without hope that "this good education will incidentally cover the major portion of its running expenses."⁶⁹ This was, in a sense, a definitive differentiation from Gandhi's original proposition.

There were efforts for an active pursuit of this Wardha Scheme on a trial basis in the Provinces ruled by the Congress for almost two years. the

major problems of implementation being the working out of the details and, even more, the training of teachers. There was also the problem of motivating guardians, pupils, and teachers in the urban areas where the craft idea was difficult to popularise, being unrelated to the urban mode of living. In short the real hiatus was about the vision of the new society in the Independent India to come about which Gandhi may have had—why, he did have — some definite ideas but which could be hardly acceptable to his followers in the Congress. In our opinion they could also be unacceptable on other grounds, such as for instance a dialectical historical view of mankind's advance. And this dilemma was never resolved then or even after Independence, by the Gandhian educationists. But in fact it got 'resolved' in a way by its own logic in favour of a basically modern capitalist, industrial society after Independence.

But before the stage of the universalization of Basic Education was reached, the War had started, the Congress quit office and the scheme just marked time or retrogressed until the Congress ministries resumed office in 1946. By the time of the transfer of power, in spite of the hectic times, the education departments in the Congress-ruled provinces had tried their best to revive the scheme. The educationists, who are always ready to support and give an educational theoretical gloss to a going idea, expatiated on it in an expansive manner.⁷⁰ But even they could not avoid the above-mentioned questions, and in referring to them getting into confusing, unresolved contradictions. For instance, consider the following extracts from Sayidain:

"...it is obvious that the success of such a scheme is bound up with... a far-reaching social, political and economic reconstruction of the country...

"the scheme makes a conscious attempt to link up education with the socio-political realities of life...

"It is inspired in its ideology as well as its methods and contents by a certain vision of society based on cooperation, truth, non-violence, and social equality. Mahatma Gandhi was emphatic in the view that this Basic Education was not to be regarded as just a new technique of teaching, but as a way of life which tried to realise certain values held as supreme."⁷¹

And yet, after having paid due obeisance to Gandhi and his ideas as well as satisfied his socio-educational conscience, Saiyidain has to speak in the same breath about "increasing *enormously* the wealth of the country through *industrialisation*" (emphasis ours) and does not think it inconsistent with Gandhi's 'way of life' — whatever that meant.⁷²

The CAFE also paid quite some attention to Basic Education by appointing two committees in 1938 which recommended eight-year school education with a five-year junior basic stage and a three-year senior basic stage and at the same time vouchsafed that it was in full agreement with Wood-Abbot Report on General and Technical Education in principle! The CAFE Report on Post-War Educational Development—discussed in the next section — also agreed that education at the lower-primary stage should centre around a basic craft or crafts but did not agree that the school production should cover the cost of education.

Basic education, as will be seen when we review educational developments of the post-1947 period, had its rise and fall, and also its pale incarnations couched in modern educational terminology, in the form of 'work experience' and 'socially useful productive work'. But it has largely remained one of those educational (non-) entities about which educationists often talk eloquently without any real thought of attempting its implementation.

VIII. The Sargent Plan

It was mentioned in the historical narrative for the period that in the last decade before the actual transfer of power (in 1947), which looked so imminent, developmental planning assumed considerable importance in the thinking of both nationalist and official quarters. A number of 'Plan' documents were published. While the document of the National Congress had an educational complement, which was more like a collection of general remarks and ideas rather than a concretised plan of action the others did not devote much attention to this subject. The most important document on educational planning, however, was the CAFE Report on Post-War Educational Development in India,⁷³ often designated as the Sargent Report, 1944, after the name of its principal author John Sargent, the then Educational Advisor to the Government of India. Incidentally it was submitted to the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1944, approved by it in October 1945, and conveyed to the Provinces in January 1946.⁷⁴ Thus it became the official document of educational planning in British India from 1946.

This Plan — the Sargent Report (SR) — is described and discussed in this section both because it was the first comprehensive attempt to prepare a plan of education for the future India and (also) because many of the educational programmes which India tried to implement after Independence followed, at least started with, the recommendations of the SR.

The objective of the SR Plan was to bring India within a period of forty years to an almost equivalent stage of educational development which the UK had achieved by then, that is, by 1939. (The implication was that it would be possible, but not so easy, even in the next four decades, to equal the then educational advance advised in the UK; perhaps it may take a much longer period.) Let us now briefly consider the most important items in the SR plan in its barest outline.

Mass Education

The SR envisaged universal, compulsory, free elementary education for all children between 6 and 14. The eight-year education consisted of two stages — a five-year Junior Basic Stage (for 6-11 age group) and a three-year Senior Basic Stage (for 11-14 age group). The contents broadly followed the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education, starting with the three 'R's along with one or more crafts suited to the local conditions. The SR did not accept the principle that the productive work involved should cover even the running expenses of elementary education but thought that it may be able to provide the additional cost (due to the introduction of craft education). The idea underlying the eight-year course was to prepare the pupil to be a working member and an enlightened citizen of the community. The whole operation of universalization was expected to cost Rs. 200 crores at the pre-War prices and population.

The SR visualized much spread of pre-primary education for children between 3 and 6 years where the child would learn through play and activity. This pre-school education was expected gradually to cover a large part of urban and rural population.

To remove the large incidence of adult illiteracy the SR proposed adult education on an extensive scale, hoping to bring every citizen between 10 and 40 in 1944 under its purview. The objective was not only to make him literate with the acquisition of the three 'R's but supplement it with adult education proper so that he becomes an effective and efficient citizen befitting the democratic polity and egalitarian society. This task was to be completed in 20 years at a cost of Rs. 9 crores. The SR enjoined the Government to undertake the primary responsibility for this programme, not leaving it to unaided voluntary agencies. The scheme also visualized 'after care' in the form of libraries well-equipped with suitable reading material.

High School Education

The High School education would be of six years' duration and it would be provided on a selective basis for about *one-fifth* of the children

completing the Junior Basic Stage at 11. Fees were to be charged for this course but every selected deserving student — about fifty per cent of those selected — was to be provided with free studentship and other concessions. The High School course was in no case to be considered as pre-University education but a terminal stage in itself, although many of them may need additional part-time or full time training for a year or two before they enter the life of work.

The High Schools were to consist of two streams: Academic and Technical. The first type would impart instruction in Arts and/or Sciences while the second would teach and provide training in Applied Sciences, Technical, Industrial and commercial subjects; in rural areas even in Agricultural Sciences. Moreover, pupils from one stream to the other should be able to do so.

The medium of instruction in all High Schools was to be the mother tongue but English would be a compulsory second language. The curriculum would also have a core which would be common to all High School students, academic or technical. In addition there would be optional subjects, the girls being provided with the choice of a course in Domestic Science as well.

Higher Education

The higher education—structure and courses—was to be thoroughly reorganized, making the degree course of three years. The Intermediate course would be eventually abolished absorbing it in the High School course. The admission to the degree course was to be selective, approximately *one in fifteen* of the High School leavers being admitted to the degree course. Equity in admission would be ensured with the provision of a liberal scheme of scholarships and free-studentships; it was expected that about one-third of the students may have to be given maintenance grants. The university courses were to be upgraded and teaching to be strengthened by introducing the tutorial system. A very high standard was expected at the post-graduate stage and in research.

Technical and Vocational Education

The SR visualized that this kind of personnel would be required at four levels: (i) Chief Executives and Research Workers, (ii) Minor Executives, Foremen, etc., (iii) Skilled Craftsmen, and (iv) Semi-skilled and Unskilled Labour. While the last would be recruited mostly from

Senior Basic School leavers, with additional training where necessary, those at level (iii) will be drafted from Technical High School leavers after training them in Junior Trade or Technical Schools for two or three years. Those at level (ii) will also be drawn from Technical High Schools but will be expected to take a National Diploma or Certificate course. The top personnel — of category (i) — would have to complete the relevant degree course of a University Department of Technology or a full-time Diploma course in a Technical Institution. Adequate facilities will have to be provided for producing all these types of personnel. Moreover, for all these courses it should be possible for anybody to take them on part-time or own-time basis when he wants to improve his qualifications.

Teachers

The SR laid great stress on securing well-qualified teachers in adequate numbers at every stage. For instance, for teachers in Pre-Basic and Junior Basic Schools, the minimum qualification to be prescribed for a teacher in Elementary Schools was the successful completion of the High School course with a training of two years; and three years' training would be required for teachers in Senior Basic Schools. Selection of prospective teachers should commence with the students in the last two years in the High School Course itself. Moreover, the SR was convinced that in order to attract suitably motivated persons to the teaching profession, the salary-scales at all levels and service conditions will have to be considerably upgraded. Without properly qualified and decently paid teachers, the SR was convinced, Indian education could not lift itself from the morass of continuing low standards. The SR aptly remarked that while the *guru* was treated with respect and reverence in the Indian tradition, his status and emoluments had now been considerably eroded in the twentieth century.

Cost

The cost has been worked out at the pre-War price level and size of population. The whole scheme would require an annual expenditure of about Rs. 312.6 crores of which Rs. 277 crores would have to come from the public exchequer—the Provincial Governments and local bodies. It was assumed that capital expenditure will be met in a large measure out of loans, provision for interest and depreciation being made in the current expenditure.

The SR recommended that all education should be with the provinces except in regard to the university and technical education. It also expected a corresponding toning up of educational administration and institution of a new All-India Educational Service.

What was the public reaction to the SR? It was hailed for being the first document which visualized in a comprehensive manner the changing educational map of India for the next two generations, going into the minutest details. It was also commended for its desire to provide equality of opportunity in education and for recognizing in unambiguous, concrete terms the crucial importance of teachers for the success of a programme on such a grand scale.

But it also evoked considerable hostile criticism as well for its many shortcomings, real or imaginary. The three main criticisms were about (a) the long time and therefore the big time-lag visualized between the outlined plan of progress and the current achievement in the advanced countries, a time-lag of 40 years; (b) the scale of costs it visualized; and (c) the lack of a detailed working programme in addition to stating the ideal to be achieved at the end of 40 years. For instance, the period of 40 years for realizing compulsory elementary education and of 20 years for eradication of adult illiteracy were felt to be too long. The Constitution (of 1950) brought it down to 10-15 years. We do not wish to offer comments on these compliments or criticisms which have become singularly out of date after 35 years of independence. The author(s) of the SR may well be justified, however, in retaliating retrospectively at their critiques by remarking that the SR in its vision was far more realistic in its targets. And it would be more than justified in view of the actual floundering through which the Indian education has passed during the last three and half decades with hardly any hope of redemption at least in respect of the Universalization of Elementary Education and Adult Education.

IX. Basic Questions of Educational Reconstruction

This chapter has so far reviewed the educational developments in India after the Montford Reforms upto the eve of the transfer of power, for the period 1920-1947. Both the educational problems proper—problems of Mass Education, Secondary Education and Higher Education—and the socio-educational problems, mainly the educational problems of backward segments of population, were described and discussed. Sometimes this was done in great detail to give the reader an idea of the sort of problems India was faced with in education throughout the colonial period, and in particular, during its last quarter of a century. This last section will recapitulate the broad features of the situation and the national expectations and aspirations in this respect for the coming future.

Modern education, English education, was first introduced in India as an organized system by the British rulers by the middle of the nineteenth century. The underlying idea then was the stabilization of their empire and

smooth running of its administration, by creating an English-educated elite who could fulfil the role of interpreters and intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled. During the later period, in the twentieth century, however, there was hardly a considered educational policy except to do the minimum necessary for preserving the colonial political economy and the imperial rule. The rest was taking place by its own logic, by way of interaction between the inadequate, half-hearted government educational efforts and the rising national consciousness and with it the growing national educational aspirations of the Indian educated as well as of the inarticulated hopes of the common people.

The resulting slow and inadequate advance in education was full of gross backwardness and acute disparities. On the eve of Independence that is, after almost a century of British rule and English education, overall literacy in India was less than 16 per cent (an estimated fourteen per cent) and only one-third of the primary age-group (6 to 11 years) was enrolled in school. The disparity was evident from the fact that female literacy was less than about 7 per cent and only one-fifth of the girls of that age-group were in school. Even this limited advance was extremely uneven, not only between sexes as mentioned above, but also between provinces and between regions in provinces, between different segments of population, e.g. urban and rural population, between the advanced castes and socio-economic groups on the one hand and the depressed castes and backward groups of society on the other. Education had not made a real dent at all among the Scheduled Castes and even more so among the Scheduled Tribes.

If one looked at the structure of the educational system one found that it was completely lopsided in the sense that there was relatively much greater growth of secondary and higher education than that of mass education, that is, primary and lower-middle education. Moreover, the overwhelming emphasis in all secondary and higher education was on the literacy-liberal variety while vocational and technical education was greatly neglected. Nearly everyone joining the Secondary School wanted to pass the matriculation examination and to proceed, if he could, to obtain the general bachelor's degree in order to secure a comfortable white-collar job, preferably in government service. Opportunities for higher scientific and technological education were very few and they were even fewer for research whether in natural or social sciences. No attention was paid to the training of high-level manpower.

Standards of instruction and content of knowledge, in High Schools or Colleges, were extremely low when compared to those in the advanced Countries. All secondary and higher education was dominated by the

knowledge of English which was the medium of instruction in Colleges and also in High Schools upto the mid-thirties of this century. This inordinate emphasis on English and the consequent neglect of Indian languages had stultified all-sided growth of the latter. Moreover, it created an unbridgeable gulf between the educated classes and the mass of common people.

It was against this colonial system, distorted and lopsided, extremely narrow in scope and spread, and its denationalizing and stultifying character and content, that the awakened Indian public opinion cried out for National Education from the beginning of the century. With the growth in national and socio-political consciousness the concept of national education also broadened in scope and became richer in content. By the time of the transfer of power in 1947, almost everyone concerned with education had come to the conclusion that the existing educational system, like everything else in the colonial system, had to be completely overhauled and restructured. Moreover, this would have to be done at a rapid pace and with a long-term plan and perspective.

What were the objectives, the national expectations, of such an educational overhaul? The main theme was to replace the colonial system by a genuine national system worthy of a changing, vibrant, independent nation, in tune with the modern age of science and technology and fulfilling the great expectations of the common people. It meant, among other things: universal free elementary education to be achieved in the shortest possible period; rapid removal of the appalling adult illiteracy; adoption of Indian languages as media at all stages of education; evolution of a rational language policy for inter-State communication in the country and for international contact; restructuring of secondary and higher education by introducing extensive opportunities for vocationalization and diversification; modernizing the contents of education all along the line including its value-base and making it socially relevant; reform of methods of instruction and evaluation; growth of facilities for teaching and research in high-level science and technology as well as in the humanities and social sciences; and devoting special care for the education of the weaker sections of society—women, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and others. Many of these objectives had been repeatedly announced from the press and the platform for more than three decades by the national leadership high and low.

It is these cherished objectives in education to which the new generations in India looked forward for fulfilment at the time of Independence. It was also then presumed that education was one field where the Indian elite had enough ideas and experience; as ministers, administrators, teachers,

managers of (many private) institutions, and also as educationists—meaning educational think-tanks and innovators. So all around were high hopes and great expectations in 1947 in this respect. What is the actual experience of the last 35 years of independence? How, and how far, does it measure up with these objectives and expectations? It is proposed to try and answer these questions in the next chapter.

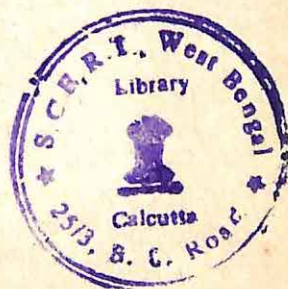
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1. *The Population of India*, CICCRED series, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 64-75.
2. See: Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *History of Education in India (during the British period)*, Macmillan, 1943, p. 446-447. The percentages of adult literacy over 15 years of age—were 4.4 and 5.3 respectively.
3. *Ibid*, chapters 1 and 2.
4. For instance out of the 26,000 students in collegiate education in Bengal in 1917-18, over 22,000 pursued 'purely literary courses'. See: *Selected Chapters of the Report of the Calcutta University Commission*, 1919, chapter 2, p. 72.
5. Much of the educational thought of India in those years, official or non-official, usually followed the ruling ideas in those respects in England—whether in the pattern of the university or compulsory education measures. After independence the tendency is to look to both the UK and the USA.
6. We should also mention here the non-statutory university, the SNDT University for Women, established in 1917. The university used Indian languages—Marathi, Gujarati—as media of instruction and examination.
7. Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *op. cit.*, pp. 419-425, 429-431.
8. Curzon had directed that Indian languages be used at the lower secondary stage. See: J.P. Naik and Syed Nurullah, *A Students' History of Education in India, 1800-1973*, 6th revised edition, Macmillan, 1974, p. 286.
9. Tara Chand, *op. cit.* Vol. III, pp. 494-495.
10. *Progress of Education, 8th Quinquennial Review 1917-1922* (hereafter called QR 1917-22), Calcutta, Government Printing Press, 1923, p. 4.
11. J.P. Naik and Syed Nurullah, *A Students' History of Education in India 1800-1973*, Macmillan, Sixth edition, 1974, pp. 305-306.
12. QR 1917-22, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
14. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 211, as quoted in Naik and Nurullah, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
15. QR 1927-32, Vol. 1, p. 3.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
17. The first figure is from Naik and Nurullah, *op. cit.*, p. 349; the others are from *Ibid.* (QR 1927-32), p. 115.
18. *Hartog Committee's Report*, p. 71.
19. *Calcutta Commission's Report*, Ch. XXX, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-137.
20. QR 1917-1922, pp. 116, 119.
21. Naik and Nurullah, *op. cit.* p. 350.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
23. QR 1917-22, p. 104.
24. QR 1922-27, p. 123.
25. QR 1932-37, p. 128.
26. QR 1922-27, pp. 127-128 and repeated in most of the QRs.

27. QR 1932-37, pp. 35-36.
28. QR 1922-27, p. 113.
29. QR 1922-27, p. 102, (Bombay Report).
30. QR 1917-22, p. 86.
31. QR 1922-27, p. 113.
32. QR 1917-22, p. 88.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
35. QR 1932-37, pp. 182-185; even then the number of students was larger than the profession could absorb.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 56, (Nagpur University report).
38. *Ibid.*, p. 69, (Bengal Report). We have quoted these extracts at some length to show that the situation 50 years ago can be compared to the present times.
39. Hartog Report, p. 240.
40. A.R. Kamat, *Supra*, Chapter 5.
41. Sections III and IV are written at some length and in a more detailed manner because in the opinion of the author they are concerned with important educational issues which existed during most of the colonial period (including 1937-1947) and many of them remain unresolved even now in the post-independence period.
42. See: A.R. Kamat, *Education and Social Change*, a forthcoming volume, the chapter on Women's Education and Social Change.
43. QR 1917-22, pp. 128-129.
44. A.R. Kamat, *op.cit.*
45. QR 1917-22, p. 129.
46. QR 1922-27, p. 7.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
48. Hartog Committee's Report, p. 166.
49. QR 1922-27, pp. 234-236.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
51. QR 1917-22, p. 205.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
53. QR 1932-37, pp. 247-248, (Bengal Report, p. 108).
54. ARK, *op. cit.*, Chapter on the Education of the SC and the ST.
55. QR 1922-27, p. 246.
56. Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *History of Education in India (during the British Period)*, Macmillan, Bombay, 1943, pp. 465-466.
57. J.P. Naik and Syed Nurullah, *A Students' History of Education in India 1800-1973*, Macmillan, Bombay, Sixth edition, 1974, p. 375.
58. *Progress of Education in India, 1937-1947, Decennial Review* (hereafter called DR), Vol. I, Government of India, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 1948, pp. 26-27.
59. Famous statement of Lenin on literacy, quoted by Syed Mohummud and reproduced in Naik & Nurullah *op. cit.*
60. Naik and Nurullah, *op.cit.*, p. 366.
61. DR, *op.cit.*, p. 119.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
64. A.R. Kamat, *Education and Social Change*, in Press, 1983, Chapter on "Women's Education and Social Change".
65. DR, *op.cit.* p. 254.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266, 287.
67. This is based on Naik and Nurullah, *op.cit.*, 1974, and collections of Gandhi's writings.

on Basic Education.

68. Naik and Nurullah. *op.cit.* p. 383.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 384-385.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 388-390, and K.G. Saiyidain's contribution in the *Year-Book of Education*, Evans Bros., 1949, as quoted in *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
73. Report of the C.A.B.E. on Post-War Educational Development in India, (known as Sargent Report after its author) Government of India, New Delhi, 1944; also reproduced as Part III in the *DR* for 1937-1947.
74. *DR*, Part I and III.



CHAPTER THREE

Post-Independence Background for Educational Changes

This chapter resumes the historical account briefly reviewing the politico-economic (and also socio-cultural) developments of the post-independence period.¹

Regarding the transfer of power in August 1947, described in the earlier chapter, it is useful to remember its three features:

(1) It created two States confronting each other, with Pakistan's two parts, separated by more than a thousand miles—a geo-political monstrosity which ended with the emergence of Bangla Desh in 1971 as a sovereign independent country;

(2) The Indian rulers got hold of the civil and military state machine undamaged, which they used in the same socio-economic structure;

(3) The new rulers belonged mostly to the Indian National Congress which wielded power without interruption for the next thirty years.

We shall use the following broad periodization in following the ensuing developments; initial period upto the enactment of the Republican Constitution in 1950 and the first general elections in 1952; the Nehru period upto the middle of the sixties; and the post-Nehru period including the ouster of the Congress in 1977 and the interregnum of the Janata Party rule from 1977 to 1980.²

I. Politico-Economic Trends

The newly independent Indian State was faced with many urgent, difficult problems inherited from the British rule and the manner in which the transfer of power and partition had taken place. The immediate problem

was to bring about communal peace, to provide protection and reassurance of normal life to the Muslims, and to restore to normalcy the life in the partitioned provinces which had borne the brunt of devastating communal killings and the great exodus. The assassination of Gandhi, the father figure of Independent India, by a Hindu fanatic shook up the entire nation, and, ironically enough, the ensuing reaction helped to a large extent to cool down the communal passions, systematically aroused, before and after partition. The related major problem was the rehabilitation of millions of refugees from the other side of the border. The economy, unsettled by the near-anarchy of the year of partition, and also by the disruption (e.g. jute and cotton production and manufacture) caused by partition, had to be taken care of.

Second, the problem of Kashmir which Pakistan lost no time to invade immediately after independence on the score that the partition was strictly on religious lines, in spite of the option given to the contiguous Princely States to join India or Pakistan, and which had been exercised in Kashmir both in the legal and popular sense while merging with India. The fighting ultimately ended in a truce and a line of actual control dividing the State. But the dispute became internationalized, on the advice of the Governor-General, Mountbatten, bringing in the United Nations. Even now Pakistan points out Kashmir as the principal item of discord to block political understanding with India. It often becomes an excuse to foment communal tension in India.

Third, the problem of umpteen Princely States, autocratic feudal vassals, which had served their British masters as bulwarks against the growing national movement. Before withdrawal the British tried to set them up, particularly larger ones like Hyderabad, as sovereign States against the newly independent Indian State. But within a year the national leadership persuaded them through a variety of approaches to integrate and merge with India, except Hyderabad for whose merger a 'police action' was used in 1948. For this use of military force there was an additional compelling reason — the suppression of the CPI-led anti-feudal peasant revolt against the Nizam's autocracy.

Another problem, also of integration, although of a smaller geographical dimension, was the return of the small pockets of French and Portugese possessions in India. The general approach was that of conciliation, and therefore of inevitable vacillations which succeeded in the case of French possessions. But the Portugese backwoodsmen of Imperial Europe proved obdurate in respect of Goa and the present Anglo-American standard bearers of imperialism also lent them support. Finally, a 'police action' in 1962 liberated this last vestige of foreign rule.

Yet another problem for India as an independent state was to evolve a viable foreign policy consistent with the anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and generally progressive stand taken by the national movement during the last phase of struggle. This was not easy in view of the need to maintain friendly relations with the Anglo-American West on the one hand and with the mighty socialist neighbours, the USSR and (since 1949) China, and lending support to the continuing anti-imperialist struggles on the other: liberation struggles in Asia, particularly south-east Asia and Africa. After initial vacillations and inconsistency, and sometimes a pronounced pro-West bias, Nehru developed the policy of non-alignment between the two blocs and a strong support to the freedom movements of all enslaved peoples. The voice of Nehru and his brilliant spokesman, Krishna Menon, became the most authentic voice of the Third World. Its highest peak was the famous Bandung Conference of 1955. This foreign policy of India raised its status in the world affairs. Moreover, it was necessary for its own interests of peace and development, and it has proved useful until now in maintaining peaceable relationship with the two power blocs, and attracting economic and technical assistance from them for India's economic growth.

Turning to internal politics, efforts were made to further strengthen the Congress and its hold. Shortly before his assassination, Gandhi had advised that the Congress should shed its character as a political party and take to service of the common people. Like his many other inconvenient ideas (e.g. opposition to partition) this was also ignored. The Congress after independence became a regular political party which fought elections and ruled. The internal tussle of its earlier phase between the majority of rightist conservatives headed by Vallabhbhai Patel and the minority section led by Nehru who could influence the masses and propagated socialism, national planning and radical land reforms, went on unabated until Patel's death in January 1950. There were differences on all important issues, e.g. national planning and the status and functions of the Planning Commission, privileges (and privy purses) of the Princes and the Civil Service, the proposed developmental policy based on curbs on big business and far-reaching agrarian reforms, powers of the Prime Minister of coordination and direction, and the relative importance of Fundamental Rights and directive principles and other provisions in the Constitution.³ In many of them Patel effectively enforced his viewpoint.

The middle-caste, land-owning rural rich-peasant elite came to be attracted, in the thirties, towards the National Congress. With the advent of independence and adult franchise, by 1949, they and other rural elites like traders had wrested from the English-educated upper-caste urban leadership the key positions in the pradesh, district and taluka committees and

started wielding enormous influence because of the network of traditional caste, kinship and economic relationships. Thus the vested interests in the urban areas — industry and trade — in alliance with these rural interests could form a solid conservative force in the Congress. It was only after Patel's death, and Nehru's firm opposition to Tandon who was elected as Congress President and had to resign due to his differences with Nehru, that Nehru's hands became relatively free and strong. This does not mean that the Congress leadership rid itself of its right wing, the strongest force in the party, which often dictated its policies. Eventually it became very powerful as the 'Syndicate' after Nehru's death.

As regards other political parties the CSP which had strongly disapproved the partition and were treated with contempt by the Congress right wing, Patel in particular, left the Congress immediately after independence. The party was subsequently rent with dissensions. And after their debacle in the first general elections in 1952, followed by the retirement from politics of Jai Prakash Narain who joined the Bhoodan movement initiated by Vinoba Bhave, it went through many convulsions of splits and reunions. The CPI was living down their unpopular war-time past and trying to head the post-war wave of mass struggles. Suddenly in 1948 it adopted an extremely sectarian policy which met with full-scale repression from the Indian Government's coercive apparatus. Drawing lessons from this ordeal of fire the CPI changed its line, fought elections in 1952, achieved creditable success, and by 1956 became almost domesticated in the process of pursuing parliamentary politics. There was no organized party of the right till 1951 when the Hindu forces — the remnants of Hindu Sabha but mainly the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the RSS, joined to found the Jana Sangh. This then was the political configuration of the fifties and early sixties, the main forces of the right and the centre operating through the Congress and some small left-oriented elements in it tailing Nehru and his kind of socialist thought.

The fragmentation of the left forces outside the Congress, their singular weakness within it, and the dominance of the Congress right wing along and its alliance with the administrative machine of repression inherited from the British imperialists accounts for the large-scale repression by the Indian rulers during 1948-1950 to contain the popular discontent breaking out into mass struggles of industrial and white-collar workers against galloping price-rise, and of tenants and share-croppers for bare subsistence livelihood and safeguards against the rapacious exploitation by the rural rich. The sectarian policies of the CPI provided the welcome 'opportunity' to unleash severe repression against these struggles. In the three years since August 1947 there were 1,982 firings on popular demonstrations, 3,784 persons killed, nearly 10,000 wounded, 50,000 jailed and 82

prisoners shot down in jail.⁴ The new Indian rulers had quickly mastered their erstwhile rulers' techniques of smothering active mass discontent. The situation cooled down only after the Constitution came into force in 1950.

The most far-reaching development of this period, influencing independent India's subsequent politics was the enactment of the Constitution of the 'sovereign democratic republic' in 1950, and the general elections in 1952 under the new Constitution with universal adult suffrage for the first time. The Constitution reflects the correlation of forces of the time: the national aspirations for a strong modern India, the democratic urge of the masses for swift economic advance and social rights, the dominant bourgeois interest for a rapid growth of industry and trade along capitalist lines, the long-professed liberal philosophy of the progressive segments of the leadership headed by Nehru, and the weak and scattered forces of the left urging for a swift onward march.

Its positive features, besides, adult suffrage are: safeguard against discrimination on grounds of religion, caste or sex; abolition of untouchability; incorporation of many democratic rights and freedoms; and special provisions—including reserved seats in legislatures and reservations in government services and educational institutions—for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. It also recommended measures for the educational advance and general uplift of these segments and also of women.

But the Constitution had in many respects a decisive tilt in favour of *status quo*. The right of private property for instance was included among the Fundamental Rights and has often been an obstacle in economic reforms (of structure) including the much-needed agrarian reforms. But citizens' rights to work, education, health, fair wage, etc., were relegated to directive principles' which were not-justiable, pious resolutions.

The second debatable feature was the federal structure. While the national movement had promised considerable autonomy to States including residual powers, the Constitution concentrated large powers in the hands of an all-powerful Centre entrusting it with residual powers. The Centre's financial and fiscal powers are so vast that the States are heavily dependent on the Central subventions—often for more than 40 per cent of their development expenditure.⁵ They find it extremely difficult to initiate innovative, productive and welfare policies, particularly if their political complexion happens to be different from that of the Centre. This has attracted considerable criticism in the past, and there is an insistent demand during the recent years to rectify the imbalance.⁶

Another reversal from the promises of the Freedom Movement, not directly connected with the text of the Constitution, was on the linguistic Reorganization of States. After 1947 the Centre was reluctant to implement this demand, calling it parochical and fissiparous. In the face of waves of mass struggles during the fifties, however, it had to concede this democratic demand. By 1960 almost all linguistic regions—except the Punjabi-speaking people who won their objective in the late sixties, in 1966—had their separate States.

But perhaps the worst feature of the Constitution was the inclusion of many of the notoriously repressive provisions of the British-made, Government of India Act of 1935, including the emergency powers. For this reason India's Constitution is sometimes described as the 'Independence edition of the 1935 Act'. These powers have been often liberally used—misused indiscriminately—during the last thirty-five years.

In spite of these negative features the enactment of the Constitution was indeed a great step forward. Its crucial weakness was highlighted by Ambedkar who, while piloting it through, correctly put his finger on the inherent contradiction between political democracy and the absence of social and economic equality in the Indian social structure. He warned that unless this contradiction is removed at the earliest, those who suffer from the inequities may blow up the whole constitutional edifice.⁷

The most fundamental problem of independent India was its stark poverty, economic backwardness both in industry and agriculture, the outmoded, skew socio-economic structure with its caste-ridden society of which untouchability and low status of women were the worst features. In 1947 the per capita annual income was Rs 250, about one-fortieth that of the USA and one-thirtieth that of the UK.⁸ During the British rule over more than a century there was hardly any improvement. Moreover, under the colonial capitalist development there was little industrialization, and that too imbalanced and distorted, and ossified agrarian relations.

All these problems needed an urgent overhaul. The national movement in the last two decades had voiced these demands and mobilized popular support around them. As mentioned before the Congress had pledged not only to increase production and achieve a rapidly increasing standard of living but to create "a social and economic order.... in which justice, social, economic and political shall inform the institutions of national life."⁹ But the Congress itself was dominated by the vested interests led by the Indian capitalists. And this class, as mentioned before, had made enormous fortunes during the war and proceeded to buy over

foreign concerns. They had increased their bargaining power and had also built their bridges with foreign monopoly capital for collaboration. They had also been thinking in terms of national planning for industrial growth and expansion.

Thus on all accounts the most important task after the transfer of power was to formulate the policy for rapid economic advance. This was outlined in the Industrial Policy Resolution of April 1948. Its objective was "to establish a wider scale and to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by exploiting the latent resources of the country, increasing production and offering opportunities to all for employment."¹⁰ The Resolution also assured foreign firms that they could operate as before on par with Indian firms, and negotiations were started for further investments on their part. Again no steps were visualized to break up the big business houses. One may note the dilution of the earlier objectives often proclaimed during the Freedom Movement. The stamp of the right-wingers in its formulation as well as the delay in the acceptance of the Planning Commission (which was ultimately appointed after Patel's death) have already been mentioned.

The Resolution divided the industrial sector into four areas: (i) area exclusively under the State sector; (ii) area where further development would be in the State sector; (iii) area under private sector under State regulation and control; and (iv) unrestricted private sector covering all other industries. This is called the 'mixed economy' which is often interpreted as 'mixing' capitalist and 'socialist' features. Clearly there was no socialist sector, and could not be. There was a state sector, and regulation and control both in the interests of laying down the necessary infrastructure of heavy industries, which the private sector was then not in a position to undertake, to give the required push to the virtually capitalist economy. This sector of State capitalism was also accepted and was even desired, by the leading Indian bourgeoisie during that initial period. In fact, in actual practice, all favours had already been shown to the private sector in the period 1947 to 1950 including removal of price-control on many items which resulted in a steep price-rise of 58 per cent in 18 months from December 1947.¹¹

II. Emergence of an Era of Planning

From 1951 began a 'planned' economic advance, much more rapid than ever before, over more than a century of British rule. In this section we shall review the developments of the first three Five-Year Plans, that is, of the Nehru period. The three successive plans were increasingly

larger in plan outlays: Rs. 3,760 crores. Rs. 7,772 crores and Rs. 12,767 crores respectively.¹²

The First Plan (1951-1956) was in fact no plan but a coordinated aggregate of various development projects proposed by the earlier regime for the post-war period, already in operation by 1951. The investments were mainly in (a) agriculture, irrigation and power, (b) transport, and (c) the service sector comprising education (including science, technology and research), health and other social services. They paved the way for the infrastructure for a rapid growth later. The Plan largely realized its objectives of revitalizing the war-worn, partition-affected economy by activating the existing industrial capacity. It also boosted agricultural production, the latter largely due to favourable monsoons and extension of land under cultivation.¹³

Real planning in the intended sense started with the Second Plan (1956-1961), more ambitious in size, conception and objectives, and with a much larger public sector. It aimed at increasing the national income by 25 per cent in five years. The economic-social goals were: (i) to enlarge the public sector ('socialistic pattern'), (ii) to develop basic, heavy industries laying the foundations for a rapid growth in the future, and (iii) to increase production of consumer goods by expanding labour-intensive, village and small-scale industries. Accordingly, a large part of investments went into iron and steel, coal, fertilizers, heavy engineering and electric power, locomotives, oil refineries, etc., all aiming at building the necessary infrastructure. This ambitious industrial programme necessarily depended on foreign aid (that is loans) and technical know-how, which also became available in a large measure both from the Western capitalist bloc and the Socialist bloc. The third objective, the development of consumer-goods industry in the labour-intensive small sector, could not be realized.

The greater emphasis on industry did not mean a neglect of agriculture, where, already during the First Plan, a four-fold programme was envisaged for stimulating the rural economy: Land Reforms, Community Development (CD) Programmes, *Panchayati Raj* and Improvement in Agricultural Technology. This will be elaborated later.

The Third Plan (1961-66) was conceived on an even more ambitious scale, in order to expand further the heavy industries and machine-building industries to strengthen the basis for further industrialization. It aimed at an annual growth rate of five per cent.

The Second and Third Plans together were conceived to transform the Indian economy into a going concern by laying down a massive basis for a self-reliant industrial growth, removing constraints on agriculture to

make it a flourishing proposition, and providing a measure of social welfare for mitigating, at least partially, the harsh economic and social inequalities. But difficulties began to crop up from the second year of the Third Plan which slowed down considerably the pace of progress. Taking the three plans, the growth actually realized was 18 per cent during the First Plan, 20 per cent as against the planned 25 in the Second, and that in the Third was as low as 13 per cent as against 30 per cent planned.¹⁴

Before discussing the difficulties and the weaknesses in the policy frame and implementation framework let us note the supporting measures and other important features of the economic policy. Although the policy of nationalization of private industries lacked a definitive thrust the Government did take over many concerns and institutions: Air India (1953), Kolar Goldfield — a British concern, the State-patronized Imperial Bank, later renamed State Bank (1955), all foreign and Indian life-insurance business (1956), etc. Nationalization of State Bank and insurance brought under the government command vast liquid resources which it could deploy for desired economic development. During this period a number of financing agencies like Industrial Development Bank (1947), Industrial Financial Corporation (1948), etc., the Unit Trust of India (1964) were established to collect savings and create an assured financial base for investment in the public and private sectors.

The necessary ideological base was also taken care of. At the political level the Avadi Resolution of the Congress of 1955 announced the (misleading) objective of 'socialism' or 'socialistic pattern of society'; at the parliamentary level the second Industrial Resolution of 1956. The first attempted to legitimise the politico-economic policy at the popular base and deflated further the influence of the left opposition. The Industrial Policy Resolution while reiterating State regulation and control between public and private sectors, small and large industries and against concentration in a few hands, actually diluted the ideological stance of the Avadi Congress resolution. It was phrased vague and ambivalent enough to accommodate many departures and relaxations. Nehru also allayed the fears of the private sector by assuring them 'Full play within its field'. The Industrial Policy Resolution, as remarked by a well known economist "set out the principles of Nehru's philosophy though it retained sufficient ambivalence to placate the uncommitted elements".¹⁵ These were evidently the necessary major concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie and their powerful spokesmen in the Congress. But this was the boldest attempt Nehru could make to release the forces of production from the colonial handicaps of the past, in an overall capitalist framework.

Let us now deal with the features of the policy implementation, for a continuing self-propelling economic growth. First, the 'liberal' import policy on non-essential goods had exhausted the sterling balances sooner than expected, and the Second and Third Plans depended on foreign aid, meaning loans, to quite a large extent; this planned industrial development also depended much on the foreign know-how. There followed collaborations for large foreign finances and the technical component. During 1950-51 to 1965-66 external assistance added to Rs. 4,508 crores, most of it being loans: 92 per cent from the Western bloc, mostly Anglo-American, and 7 per cent from the USSR and other Socialist countries; the latter was mainly utilized in heavy industries where the Western policy had become obstructive.¹⁶ Of the former about one-third was on account of PL 480 grain aid to tide over the difficult food situation in that period. While it saved the Indian Government from urban discontent it depressed and postponed the growth of Indian agriculture and rendered the country dependent for such a vital item as food. Besides, a substantial part of this assistance went to the private sector, in such non-essential items as refrigerators, airconditioners, terylene, cosmetics, ball-pens, etc. The growing burden of interest and repayment of loans, and dependence because of import of spare parts, were contrary to the objective of self-reliance.

Second, the regulatory machinery to control the private sector and the Industrial Licensing Policy. The Resolutions of 1948 and 1956 had visualized these controls professedly for stimulating and directing industrial growth, and preventing growth of monopolies. But, according to many investigations, their operation reeked of rank nepotism, corruption and favouritism mainly in favour of certain big business houses (e.g. Birlas). The licensing policy was often used indiscriminately for foreign collaborations disregarding national interests. The financial institutions channelized their funding to reinforce this 'licence-permit Raj' and strengthen the inordinate influence of the same business houses on the economy (and also the politics) of the country. Their 'regulated' mode of development made almost everybody of any consequence happy — the bureaucrats and politicians who could sell their power, the big (and even small) business for getting everything on a *quid pro quo* basis, and the intellectuals who thought that it was bringing about rapid growth with social justice!¹⁷

This 'controlled' capitalism produced other serious distortions contrary to the goals. First, the policy created serious regional imbalances in the industrial growth: Maharashtra accounts for almost a quarter of the total of modern industrialization and together with West Bengal, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu (and now Delhi) overwhelmingly dominates the industrial sector at the expense of the backward States like UP, Bihar, AP, MP, etc.

Similar imbalances are also apparent between regions within the industrially advanced States. Second, this growth did not bring about a commensurate growth in employment. Industrial workers increased from 13.3 million in 1951 to 18.8 million in 1961 and regressed to 18.0 million in 1971, their percentage to the total work force remaining between 9.5 and 9.9.¹⁸

Third, during the period of the three plans, in spite of the policy of regulation, there was an unbelievably rapid growth of concentration of capital and of the tie-ups with foreign monopolies, as is brought out by several official and non-official studies. While it was estimated that in 1966-67 those who had an income over Rs. 1 lakh (0.1 million) were about 0.07 per cent of the gainfully employed population,¹⁹ at the top some 75 business houses controlled 47 per cent of the assets of the corporate sector in 1965.²⁰ And it is mainly these big business houses which have collaborations with foreign monopolists and multinationals. Needless to say, the increase of Indian big business and foreign collaborators have stifled indigenous initiative for the R and D, for a technology more in consonance with the indigenous economy.

Finally, with this growth and concentration, the Indian big business which was already influential in the Congress politics, has come to wield enormously increased pressure on the Indian political life. In the mid-sixties it was a common talk that some 100 MPs, irrespective of their respective parties, really owed allegiance to a certain monopoly house. In early 1965 one top monopolist threatened that "government's policy of humiliating the industrialists will recoil on them some time and make many a leader's head roll". The later revelation in 1979 by George Fernandes that there was no file in the Industries Ministry of which this monopoly house had no copy confirms the enormous political strength of the big business in India.²¹

The real bottleneck during the three Plans was agriculture where "the complex of legal, economic, and social relations of the Indian countryside" acted as "a built-in depressor".²² In November 1947 the AICC had resolved that "land, with its mineral resources, and other means of production belong to, and be regulated by the community in its own interests". And the Agrarian Reforms Committee of the Congress, in its report in 1949, obviously responding to the Telengana peasant struggle, advocated radical land reforms, small and medium farms, and cooperatives as the best safeguard for peasants and those working and living on land. The First Plan also advocated significant redistribution of land and a cooperative pattern of agricultural development.²³

In the initial phase the big estates of the ex-Princes and the big zamindars were broken up and the interests of certain 'intermediaries' and absentee landlords were abolished, often with substantial compensation. But soon the land reforms got enmeshed in tenancy legislations with many loopholes and leakages in their implementation. Myrdal describes them as 'mini-reforms or outright sham'.²⁴ The Bhoodan Movement started by Vinoba Bhave with great fanfare advocating voluntary surrender of land for redistribution, also ended in failure, having accomplished its task of providing an ineffective diversion to the militant peasant struggles for land distribution like the Telengana revolt. In 1953 the top 13 per cent of the rural households, owning 10 acres or more, controlled 65 per cent of land, and despite many land-legislations, the pattern of land distribution has hardly seen any substantial change in the distribution since then.²⁵ On the other hand the landless, then 38 per cent, must have increased considerably.

Nehru had succeeded in incorporating land ceilings, service cooperatives and cooperative farming in the previous plans; but when he tried to include the fourth component, of state trading in foodgrains in the Third Plan, there was a hue and cry that "a major property redistribution is taking place!"²⁶ The state trading in foodgrains has always been a non-starter, except for the building of a buffer stock in the post-Nehru period. The ineffectiveness of the land-ceiling laws is already mentioned. The cooperatives did materialize, but in a distorted form, for the benefit of the affluent peasantry, getting substantial state aid through them.

Let us have a brief look at the other programmes: (a) the CD programmes, (b) devolution of political power in the form of Panchayati Raj, both mentioned before, and (c) agricultural research in new techniques and their extension to improve productivity. The first launched with US aid, expertise and a large number of experts in 1952 created "the extraordinary demi-Raj" of the US in India,²⁷ but largely failed to accomplish its objectives of fostering general rural welfare. However, the programme did provide some rural economic infrastructure for the *Panchayati Raj*, which started in the late fifties and early sixties. The Panchayats brought political power to the rural elite who had already immensely benefited by cheap irrigation facilities, fertilizers and power produced with large state investments during the three Plans and supplied to them at concessional rates. The third programme made a feeble start in the Nehru period but produced spectacular results in the late sixties and early seventies, the so-named 'Green Revolution', mostly in irrigated crops like sugarcane, wheat and cotton. The development of transport, road transport, and agricultural marketing, Cooperative Credit and Marketing Societies integrated the

villages and their elites among themselves and with the towns and cities. The Indian village no longer remained isolated.

Thus all these large investments, programmes, facilities and new techniques, and other rural programmes helped the capitalist penetration into agriculture. It considerably strengthened the peasant elite economically, and, with adult franchise introduced in 1952 and *Panchayati Raj* later gave him a political leverage. He headed the Congress organization and Government, from the village and taluka levels to the State and Central levels.

As regards agricultural production it rose considerably in the initial period, mainly due to extension in area under cultivation and irrigation, depressed during the PL 480 regime, and rose to new peaks with the introduction of new techniques and new varieties. But along with the rise of the new rich-peasant elite, with enhanced economic and political power, there was also a phenomenal increase in the landless labour resulting in a pronounced disequalization and polarization in the countryside.

To summarize briefly the developments — achievements and failures — of the Nehru period, the principal achievements were: integration of the Princely States; evolution of a viable foreign policy; abolition of big zamindari and enactment of 'mini' land reforms; creation of a strong public sector and a potential self-sustaining economic infrastructure including heavy industries; creating the necessary basis for rural development — irrigation, power and transport and supporting financial and political institutions; a flourishing private sector in industry and trade; expansion of education including science, technology and research; an appreciable improvement in the conditions of the SC, ST, and other backward classes including women; rise of a powerful class of rich peasants providing the backbone of the rural political base. During this period there was a 7 per cent growth rate in industry, 4 per cent in agriculture, 4.11 per cent in national income, and 2.07 per cent in per capita income.²⁸ All these are indeed impressive when compared with the colonial era of stagnation and extremely slow change during the 150 years of British rule.

The main failures were: unbalanced and distorted growth of industry and agriculture; dependence on foreign aid and technology; rapid rise and domination of monopoly interests; unholy collusion of bureaucracy, urban and rural vested interests and political leadership in corruption and nepotism and rank malpractices; phenomenal rise in unemployment; growing inequality in income and assets both in urban and rural areas making a travesty of all pre-independence promises in this respect including

that of 'socialism'. In short it was a clear victory for Indian capitalism both in industry and agriculture tempered by only a few welfarish measures because of the popular pressures.

Politically speaking the Nehru period, after the initial short spell, was on the whole stable and peaceful except for the massive movements for the linguistic reorganization. The rapid pace of economic development with a part of the largesse filtering to the middle classes, and Nehru's well-modulated slogans of 'socialism' had taken the sting out of middle class radicalism and quiesced the left parties into illusions of a gradualist path to social transformation. Nehru followed centrist socio-economic and socio-political policies in the existing framework, and in his foreign policy, he cultivated friendship with both the blocs and, in particular close relations with the big neighbours, the USSR and China which brought immense prestige both to him and India. Thus he had the image of a successful and benign ruler, except in the last phase, with the failure in the China affair and with language riots in the South over Hindi.

Speaking about political parties, as mentioned before, the Congress was no longer a broad political front but had become a party of the urban and rural vested interests. Moreover, centrifugal tendencies had started working, building up powerful regional leaders with their own mass following, the central writ no longer remaining unquestioned. As mentioned earlier the class complexion of the leadership had clearly changed in favour of the rising rural, land-owning, middle-castes and middle strata. In the last two years of Nehru's rule economic and political difficulties had cropped up and his policies were challenged openly by the Congress leaders themselves. And on the issue of the defeat inflicted by China the conservative forces in the Congress not only succeeded in hounding out his faithful exponent, Krishna Menon, but were also after his blood. The staving of operations, the Kamaraj plan and the Bhubaneshwar resolution did not stop the rot and Nehru died a sad, disappointed man in May 1964. His role, in a sense, had already been over.

In this period the left parties did not achieve much advance except the CPI who came to power in Kerala through the bourgeois democratic process of elections, only to be ousted unceremoniously later. The party split over the Chinese conflict in two almost evenly balanced segments, the CPI and the CPI(M) or simply the CPM. The socialists suffered splits and reunions, and in some States they sometimes played the role of left-oriented ginger groups. The rightist forces were gathering strength in the Congress and also outside, in the Jana Sangh and in the Swatantra Party founded in 1959 which collected all sorts of anti-Congress elements from

the ex-Princes, big business and ex-Congressmen like Rajagopalachari who were bitterly opposed to the centrist policies of Nehru and his non-aligned foreign policy.

The period after Nehru opened on this economic and political perspective.

III. Developments during the Post-Nehru Era

As mentioned in the last section, towards the end of Nehru period the rightist, anti-Nehru and regional forces were gathering strength. Their group in the Congress leadership came to be later known as the 'Syndicate'. Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was close to Nehru in his last days, was acceptable to the Congress President, Kamaraj, and the Syndicate as a successor Prime Minister.

Shastri had only a short tenure of 20 months in office during which there was a three-week war with Pakistan which had attacked the Kashmir line of control in August-September 1965. After a truce a peace conference was held at Tashkent at the Soviet initiative. On the night following the signing of peace agreement Shastri died of a heart attack on January 10, 1966. The Congress conclave now selected Indira Gandhi as the new Prime Minister with Morarjee Desai as the second man and Finance Minister in the Cabinet.

Shastri in his brief period of office gave a definite rightist turn to the development policy — reducing the role of the Planning Commission in the formulation of policies, shift from controls to incentives as major instruments of economic development, a new agricultural strategy to concentrate inputs in irrigated areas, and greater scope for private domestic and foreign investments in industry. The Nehru strategy of self-reliant growth and emphasis on basic, heavy industries, and land reforms with cooperative sector in agriculture, was given up.²⁹

The two border wars and two years of drought had adversely affected the Indian economy. Shastri accepted the strategy suggested by his advisers outlined above together with soliciting loans from the World Bank and the IMF. The World Bank insisted on a policy fundamentally different from the Nehru policy and made it a condition for substantial aid during the next few years. Under the pressure of the IMF, Subramaniam, the Minister for Agriculture, submitted to them the plans of his ministry for approval; moreover, the IMF demanded a substantial devaluation of the rupee to which the Government's then economic policy advisers—Ashok Mehta, Subramaniam, L.K. Jha and B.K. Nehru — agreed. The imple-

mentation of these conditions was interrupted by Shastri's sudden death but was carried out in Indira Gandhi's regime, after June 1966, beginning with the devaluation of the rupee by 57.5 per cent. This was one of the important factors for the political set-back for the Congress in the general elections next year.³⁰

Before we take it up, however, let us briefly go over the intervening period. The rapid economic development over the three Plans had brought unprecedented affluence to the vested interests in industry, trade and agriculture which made them politically very powerful both within the Congress and without it, in the Swatantra, the Jana Sangh and other formations. Moreover, the period since 1964 (in fact from 1962) was a difficult one. The defence expenditure, risen three-fold consequent to the two wars (of 1962 and 1965) put great strain on the economy which was further aggravated by the two years of drought (1965-67), necessitating massive food imports. A firm recovery was in sight only in 1969 with the 'wheat revolution' in Punjab and the adjoining areas. Again foreign aid had dried up, the donors dictated changes in the economic and foreign policies of India. It is in this situation the policies were given a definite rightist orientation including devaluation, described above, by the Indian Government, by Shastri and Indira Gandhi.

The resulting economic setback and disarray had resulted in acute discontent reflected in mounting mass struggles against rapidly escalating price-rise, wage-cuts and unemployment. Sectarian movements like the DMK-sponsored anti-Hindu agitations in Tamil Nadu in 1965-66, and Shiv Sena in Bombay, sectarian violence in the form of communal riots and language agitations, the loud clamour of the vested interests in industry, trade and agriculture, the consequent strengthening of the rightist parties, the divided left, and the Congress factionalism — this was the situation before the general elections of 1967.

The Congress suffered serious reverses in the elections, its strength in the Lok Sabha considerably depleted, only 282 seats in a house of 520, and lost power in several States — Communist-led governments in Kerala and West Bengal and odd combinations of political parties of the right and left in five other States. Many of these State governments went out of office because of mass-scale defections — between 1967 and 1970 there were 1827 defections as compared to the total of 3487 seats³¹ — and use of extra-Constitutional methods including sheer terror in West Bengal and Kerala.

It was after 1967 elections that an effort was made to restore some prestige to economic planning when the well known economist, D.R.

Gadgil, was inducted, at the instance of Morarjee Desai, to head the Planning Commission. Gadgil and his thinking fitted in well with the prevailing view about the Commission because he had also regarded it as only an expert, advisory body. Gadgil adopted 'growth with stability' as its guiding principle which essentially meant an entrepreneurial approach — reliance on the private sector's initiative, and incentives for private investment.³² The question of reducing inequalities and raising living standards, therefore, just did not arise; or was only incidental. Actually the last two years of the Third Plan (1965-1966) and the three years 1966-69 went without much serious planning; the period was aptly described as a 'plan holiday'. Even after the end of Gadgil's tenure in 1971, planning and the Commission did not regain their status of the Nehru period.

Before following the further politico-economic developments it is useful at this stage to briefly present a total picture of economic development in the post-Nehru period (1965-1977).

First, there was considerable slowing down of economic growth in the period after the mid-sixties: the growth rate in national income (at constant prices) fell from 4.11 per cent in the earlier period to less than 3.94 per cent in this period from 1967-68 to 1976-77 omitting the years 1965-67 of severe drought); the growth rate in per capita income from 2.07 per cent to 1.74 per cent.³³ Moreover, while there was largely a steady growth in the earlier period, it was much more erratic in the later period, significant growth following almost invariably good agricultural seasons.³⁴ Considering sectoral growth industrial growth rate decreased from 7 per cent to 4.2 per cent between 1965-66 and 1976-77; the growth rate in all foodgrains rose from 3.1 per cent in the period 1950-51 to 1964-65 to 4.8 per cent in 1967-68 to 1970-71 but if one extends the period to 1975-76 it does not exceed 3 per cent. The spurt in the four years 1967-71 is obviously due to the 'wheat revolution'; its production rose phenomenally and then tapered off. Another index is the change in the sectoral shares in the Net Domestic Product (NDP). The share of the primary sector (mainly agriculture) fell from 57.0 per cent in 1950-51 to 45.5 per cent in 1967-68 and slightly further to 42.7 in 1975-76; that of the secondary (industrial) sector rose from 16.4 per cent to 22.2 and then almost stabilized at 22.8 (in the same years); and that of the tertiary or service sector increased from 26.6 per cent to 32.3 and further to 34.5. This clearly shows the slow down in the industrial sector in the post-Nehru period.³⁵

This deceleration of growth was inevitably accompanied by a steep rise in agricultural labour, and in unemployment both in the urban and rural areas, unchecked rapid rise in prices and consequently in pover-

ty, and further deterioration in the quality of life. Thus, Indian economy, after a good measure of advance upto mid-sixties, entered a growing crisis from the mid-sixties.

To complete the picture, let us briefly touch the other relevant features of this crisis. Inflation was modest upto 1960-61, started a rapid increase later, its worst years being 1965-67, 1972-74, (both drought-hit), and again after 1979. One contributing factor to it is the parallel economy of 'black' — unaccounted — money generated in industry, trade and substantial peasantry. It provided an economic paradise to speculators. The unemployment — known unemployment — rose to 20.6 million in 1978, 16.5 million in rural areas and 4.1 million in urban areas. The landless agricultural labour rose from 18 per cent (of the unorganized workforce) in 1961 to 29 per cent in 1971.³⁶ Income and asset distributions became more skew. The incidence of poverty, the number living below the poverty line, increased and the lowest official estimate — in the Draft Sixth Plan — was about 47 per cent in 1977-78. Finally, the terms of trade moved in favour of the agricultural sector from the sixties to 1974-75—a tribute to the enhanced political strength of the rich peasants—but there were somewhat reverse trends later upto 1980.³⁷

The election debacle of 1967 had increased factionalism in the Congress. The anti-Nehru right was the 'Syndicate', never liked Indira Gandhi; and Morarjee Desai always considered himself as the best person to be the Prime Minister, and had become more active. Indira Gandhi decided to use a left-sounding centrist diversion by proposing abolition of the privileges and privy purses of the ex-princes and nationalization of banks and general insurance. In the eventual factional struggle in 1969, centred around the Presidential Election in August 1969 and with no holds barred, the Congress party split for the first time, and she emerged as the 'progressive' leader of the larger Congress segment. With the strength in the Lok Sabha further reduced, for the survival of her prime-ministership Indira Gandhi arrived at an understanding with the outside left — the CPI — which willingly offered her support as it fitted with their policy of 'left and democratic unity' and 'unity and struggle'. To bolster up her own and her party's image she went in for a few more nationalizations and acquiesced in a minimum bonus of 8.33 per cent to all workers and employees in the organized sector.

With a good sense of timing and sensing the people's mood Indira Gandhi went in for mid-term elections of Lok Sabha in 1971 with the *Garibi Hatao* ('Remove Poverty') slogan and won a thumping, more than two-thirds, majority from the voters who were fed up with the performance of the opposition parties in the States since 1967. The crisis in East

Pakistan due to the Punjabi-dominated dictatorial terror regime had provoked a liberation struggle for Bangla Desh. In 1971 this resulted in an exodus of more than 10 million refugees into India. Indira Gandhi displayed rare political skill. By a measured defiance of the American overbearance countering it by signing a timely Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, and adoption of a remarkably politico-military strategy she inflicted a resounding defeat on Pakistan which resulted in the creation of an independent State of Bangla Desh, thus breaking one vital link in India's encirclement. The political stature and the charisma thus acquired enabled her to repeat her winning performance in the State elections in 1972. She no longer needed the crutches of the left-of-the centre political elements including the CPI, and her position in the party and the country became unassailable, at least for the time being.

Under the clouds of glory of centrist economic policies and foreign policy, however, strong authoritarianism was creeping into Indian politics in the form of the whetting and unprecedented expansion of various paramilitary forces. Such trends showed themselves up in imposing severe curbs on the activities of the Naxalites, splinter communist groups, working among the extremely exploited landless labour and tribal poor, ousting of the CPM-led government in West Bengal etc. reminding one of the ousting of the government in Kerala in 1959. By 1973, according to one estimate, in the course of such trends, some 2000 were killed in cold blood and more than 30,000 were sent to prison either under false charges or under the Preventive Detention Law.³⁸ State's coercive apparatus appeared to be used in an open manner to suppress certain political forces. This use of power, a precursor of the Emergency rule, went unnoticed at the time by most political parties of the opposition either through shortsight or common class interests.

The euphoria over being seated firmly in the perch for another term, however, could not last long. Difficulties soon collected in crowds to beset the economy: worst drought years of 1972-74; drying up of Western aid due to India's help to the liberation struggle of Bangla Desh; steep rise in oil prices and prices of other imports like fertilizers and foodgrains. Rise in the price level was over fifty per cent in the two years; the national income stagnated and per capita income went down. To meet the situation the economic policy was given a new direction, this time again a definite rightward swing: liberalization of imports and concessions to the entrepreneurs, loans from the World Bank and the IMF, collaboration with multinationals, curbs on wage demands. Simultaneously, strong measures were introduced with manifestations in several fields like suppression of strikes, anti-price rise agitation and the like.

The popular discontent — and a kind of anti-Congress, anti-government feeling — was spreading in the country and political opposition started building up against the Congress rule: strikes, bandhs, hartals by workers, white-collar employees; students and the rural poor against price-rise, unemployment and rampant corruption among the bureaucracy and politicians at all levels on the one hand, and indiscriminate arrests, lathi charges and firings on the other, became the order of the day. The agitations reached a new pitch in 1974-75 in Gujarat and Bihar and demanded resignation of corrupt, inefficient ministries and dissolution of State legislatures.

By this time the political alignments had crystallised: the disparate collection of opposition — the Jana Sangh, Congress (O), BLD, etc., supported by the Socialists — against the ruling Congress of Indira Gandhi supported by the CPI guided by their policy of "the left and Democratic Forces fighting the Right Reactionaries". The CPM was paralysed due to official terror and puzzled over the rightist composition of the crowd gathered around Jai Prakash; and the CPI(ML), that is, the Naxalites reeling under the government onslaught and their own sectarianism and factionalism. Thus the main confrontation was hardly a class confrontation with one side sponsoring definitely a further democratic advance of the people. Simultaneously, a coterie of immature politicians, corrupt, unscrupulous and beyond law or accountability had formed itself around crucial ruling elements, a coterie which would stop at nothing.

It is at this juncture, in 1975, that Indira Gandhi was unseated from Lok Sabha in June by a judgement of the Allahabad High Court in an election petition filed against her. To continue herself in power against the call to resign by the united opposition, and by a section in her own party, she clamped a blanket emergency arguing that the 'Right Reactionaries' had planned a plot to take over the government. There were pre-emptive arrests, all freedoms suppressed, the entire press muzzled, and over one lakh people were imprisoned. The Constitution was drastically amended so as to concentrate all powers in the hands of the prime minister.

While a few left-sounding sops were offered to the people in the twenty-point programme, augmented later with Sanjay Gandhi's five points, further cuts were imposed on the earning of industrial workers and white-collar employees, who were not only deprived of their rights of organization but also their hard-won bonus and the DA was frozen. On the other hand the Indian capitalists and the rural rich were given further concessions and the Western Bloc and the World Bank were surreptitiously wooed with concessions for further loans, investment and know-how. The Indian bourgeoisie had never had it so good with drastic curbs on labour

and wide-ranging incentives for themselves, so much so, that these loud mouthed spokesmen of 'freedom' were singing paeans to this manifestly 'un-free' rule — some of them right upto a fortnight prior to the announcement of elections in January 1977!

Prices came down somewhat in the first few months of the Emergency; but soon they resumed the upward spiral. And the bankruptcy of the pious twentyfive points and the *Garibi Hatao* slogan was evident from the fact that in spite of good monsoon and a consequent bumper stock of 18 million tons of foodgrains in 1976 food was still beyond the reach of the poor and there was no dent in unemployment.

In the final phase of the Emergency the coterie which the prime minister and her son had collected around them threw caution to the winds; there followed terror campaigns for slum clearance in Delhi and for family planning at other places. The last vestige of the Emergency doing good to the common people had disappeared.

Whatever the reasons, whether fear of large-scale revolts or miscalculation or overconfidence, Indira Gandhi suddenly announced in January 1977 Lok Sabha elections in March. In the elections the Congress Party and even Indira Gandhi were soundly defeated by the hurriedly collected conglomerate of opposition parties around Jai Prakash Narain, labelled the Janata Party. They assumed office with Morarjee Desai as prime minister and immediately held elections in a number of States. Everywhere except in two States the non-Congress parties came to power.

The Janata government, with its disparate constituents, ruled for about 28 months and foundered on acute internal factionalism, and was followed by a caretaker, non-functioning government of Charan Singh, who achieved his life's ambition of being a prime minister, until fresh Lok Sabha elections in 1980.

The major achievement of the Janata government was the restoration of democratic, constitutional norms wiping out the emergency measures. But otherwise it followed a pronounced rightist policy in the economy, polity and foreign policy — concession to industry, trade and rich peasantry, particularly for the latter two, at the expense of the common consumers in general and the rural poor in particular, together with pro-US tilt in international affairs. Its bias against the working class and the SC/ST and landless labour, with a pronounced communal tilt, was evident from the violent, repressive methods used in a rash of incidents from Kanpur and Faridabad to Belchi, Bailladilla, Aligarh and Jamshedpur.

Its negative features were: inability to use the good monsoons and large stocks of foodgrains for either giving the necessary push to the economy or make a dent in poverty, unemployment or increasing price-rise; neglect of and repression against the rural poor; violence in the countryside spreading to the cities; sectional vested interests — big business, trade and kulaks — assiduously pursuing their separate interests; and above all acute dissensions among the constituent groups and persons which reduced it to a non-ruling reign.

In that short period the greatest gainers were the RSS/Jana Sangh, other parties lost their influence, the worst loser being the Socialists. The CPM consolidated its position, but only in its traditional bases of Kerala and West Bengal and Tripura; and the CPI, after an agonising reappraisal, gave up tailing the Indira Congress, thus paving the way for the unity of the left. The Congress went through many splits, but eventually the larger segment around Indira Gandhi made a spectacular come-back with a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha elections in January 1980. The Janata party and all its constituents were mostly wiped out. It was the politically conscious electorate's verdict against the Janata's non-functioning regime, indecisive yet rightist socio-economic policies and acute internal dissensions. It is only the CPM which could hold its forts.

Confining this historical analysis to the end of 1980, the one year of the Indira Congress government's new incarnation, coming to power with a promise to give a 'government that works', was only trying to remove some anomalies of the Janata rule and ruling from the top without letting the party grow at grass roots and build a popular base for bringing about social transformation.

It is perhaps useful to recapitulate briefly the developments of the post-Independence period.

There was a decisive economic advance, much more extensive and intensive than all the advance during the long period under the British rule. This was in a capitalist framework, without radical reorganization of the socio-economic structure. In fact the structure has become more unequal. In the meanwhile the population has almost doubled during the 35 years. These developments can be divided into two phases: the first phase of rapid, more or less uninterrupted advance, fully exploiting the existing structure and laying down the foundations of a going economy and the accompanying political stability; and the second phase from the mid-sixties of a slow-down, of a halting and erratic development, with a consequent political destabilization which has gone through a nineteen-month emergency rule and portends increasingly turbulent times thereafter.

We have tried to point out in this account both the positive and negative features of this period and more particularly their legacy for the present and the future. The glaring failures and weaknesses in the situation are candidly pointed out by the Draft Sixth Plan 1978, its candidness being perhaps a reflection of the relative freedom of expression the planners had in that period. They are summarised here: Increased concentration of economic power both in the industrial and agricultural sectors, the major beneficiaries of economic growth and economic produce — consumer goods — are the wealthier sections of urban and rural areas, the vast majority being barely touched; In the fifteen years since 1961 the manufacturing sector increased by 139 per cent, output by 161 per cent, but employment by only 71 per cent; Increase of landless labour during the same period from 18 to 29 per cent; Increasing unemployment with an annual addition of 5 million to the labour force of which only half a million can get employment in the organized sector; the number below the poverty line in 1977-78 was about 47 per cent; The most cherished goals of "full employment, the eradication of poverty and creation of a more equal society" are "as distant today as when we set out on the road to planned development."³⁹

This state of affairs can only be described as the continuing socio-economic 'emergency' permanently with us. If it continues with no genuine far-reaching efforts to eradicate poverty, the country cannot hope to have a period without turmoil and upheavals, and an authoritarian regime lurking behind them.⁴⁰

IV. In the Grip of Crisis of Self-Identity

This section deals with other aspects of social change that has come about during the post-independence period: major shifts in the social structure, and cultural, linguistic, literary and such other areas.⁴¹

First, the changes in the social structure. The concentration and consolidation of the industrial and trading big business has already been mentioned; so is the partial eclipse of the feudal class and the emergence of the land-owning class of rich peasants; their alliance in the economy and politics has also consequences in the social sphere. With the spread of education the composition of the educated class has also changed, of course, ancillary to the ruling vested interests mentioned above. With a rapid economic and educational development has arisen a super elite amongst them, mostly belonging to socially upper layers and economically more affluent manning higher positions in industry, business, and higher echelons of bureaucracy and the defence forces. Then there is the middle-level educated elite which comes from the upper and middle castes, urban

and rural segments, followed by the lower educated class mostly belonging to the middle-level and lower castes, and of small-town or rural origin.

Thanks to the special facilities provided to the SC/ST, a new elite has arisen amongst them as well and they have entered the different levels of educated elite but mostly at the middle, lower and lowest levels, in that order. They have also thrown up political elites who have a dependency relation with the ruling elite. At the same time the plight of the large majority of them still remains unredeemed, and in the last few years they are subjected to the deliberately contrived caste-Hindu attacks on them as evidenced by the riots and burnings in Marathwada, Gujarat and elsewhere.

With the advance in education and recognition of equality under the Constitution, the position of women as regards employment opportunity and social status has changed for the better. Similarly the rigour of the caste hierarchy and untouchability has also declined, particularly in the urban areas and in the public sphere, but not at the pace necessary for rapid social transformation. In fact in the recent fifteen/twenty years there is a roll back in all these matters including the practice of secularism.

The Muslims went through a trauma after partition and sections of them tried to live in closed conclaves of exclusivism under the influence of their religious leadership. This was aggravated by the verbal denunciations and activities of the communalist Hindu formations—political, social and cultural. But over the last few years one sees the beginning — feeble so far — of the process of their coming out of exclusivism to join the main stream of economy, polity, education and culture.

After independence Indian languages were expected to come into their own and develop to their potential stature. The delay and also the obstinate opposition to the formation of linguistic States was not a happy augury for arriving at a consensus over the language problem including the status of Hindi and English. Consequently there has been no substantial reduction in the overbearing influence of English on the educational, intellectual and cultural life of the country; in fact the reverse has happened. The 'three-language formula' was never worked sincerely by the chauvinists of the Hindi area and Hindi became a matter of resentment, for fear of Hindi domination, in the South, particularly in Tamil Nadu. As a result the inordinate influence of English continues and grows and prevents a free development of Indian languages. Adult suffrage brought the rural elite to positions of power. This historic social change along with linguistic States did help Indian languages develop to an appreciable extent during the last three decades. But the continuing dominance of

English—supported by the present elites whose interests are involved in its continuance—imposes serious constraints to their further advance and flowering. Thus 'the cultural imperialism' of English and the 'bastard culture' which it has produced still continue. As we have said elsewhere, this further substantial advance of Indian languages, it seems, has to wait for further democratization of our society, a radical socio-structural transformation which will bring the mass of common people to the centres of economic and political power.⁴²

The situation in literature both didactic and *belles lettres*, in arts, in theatre and films, in media of mass communications like radio and television is no better. After some initial advance after independence the situation is that of stalemate or pale, perverse and cheap imitation of Anglo-American or other Western trends or a retrogression to religious revivalism in the name of indigenisation. It is true that there are exceptions, forward-looking trends to which one may look with hope. But they have not yet acquired the status of a pace-setter for a real advance.

Finally, if we consider the domain of ideology or value framework, one finds a similar predicament. The liberalism of the pre-independence period in combination with some kind of radicalism going under the name of socialism, and which partly provided the value basis for the Constitution-makers, has both made advances and retreats — advance in the sense that some of the radical formations among the exploited and the oppressed and among some few of the educated youth are carrying it forward. And retreat in the sense that the embourgeoisment of the majority of the elite including the educated middle class are either hankering after the decadent norms of the advanced Western capitalism or retrogressing into religious revivalism under the specious plea of Indianization—meaning 'Hinduisation'. Instead of transcending the liberal-bourgeois paradigm of tradition to modernity by accepting the value framework of a radical socio-economic transformation, they are getting bogged down in the morass of decadence or taking recourse to the reverse paradigm of 'modernity to tradition' which contradicts their daily life but becomes an ideological roadblock to the process of enlightenment leading to social transformation.

Thus in the cultural-ideological sphere also we are in a state of crisis between the old which is dying and the new which lies in the womb of the future, and of which we only see feeble signs. In the meanwhile this crisis, this stalemate, this retrogression are producing a harvest of disruptive forces which first arose in the late sixties in the form of regional formations like Shiv Sena directed against South Indians in Bombay, virulent anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu or the Assam movement against the 'outsiders'.

In sum, in the cultural-ideological sphere also, India is faced with the crisis of self-identity for a desirable future.

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40. Much of the account in the latter half of this section is based on our *Essays on Social Change in India*, *op.cit.*, essay 2, pp. 50-61.
41. This section is based on the relevant chapters in our forthcoming book: *Education and Social Change in India*, Somaiya, Bombay, (in press).
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CHAPTER FOUR

Educational Developments 1947-1980

I. Immediate Post-Independence Policies on Education

With the transfer of power in 1947 India enters a new era in education, the era of independence. The new, national government of India inherited, like the rest of the State machinery, also the colonial system of education. In a sense it was a running concern, but, as pointed out in the last chapter, India was educationally very backward, and educational development was lopsided, distorted and defective. It needed a complete overhaul, a rapid expansion and a substantial qualitative improvement, in tune with a modern, independent, developing nation. We have briefly stated in the last chapter the objectives and expectations of the new system which was supposed to replace the old colonial system. This chapter describes and analyses the actual educational developments in post-independence India.

It took a couple of years for the Government of India to stabilize the general economic, political and social situation in the country after the travails and tribulations it had to pass through before and after partition. In actual fact, the new administration could start planned development only by 1950, when the Republican Constitution was adopted, and more vigorously after the first general elections held in 1952. But this interim period could not be a void; things were moving in education as well. Already when the Congress governments returned to power in 1946 under the British rule they resumed the educational advance from the stage when they had resigned at the end of 1939. The new policies, in many cases were refurbished versions of the old, taking into account both the development perspective of the Sargent Report and the context of the Independent India in the offing. While partitioned Provinces — States — had to rehabilitate the educational apparatus partially (or in its entirety in areas like Punjab) most other States continued with the old system and old administrative machinery. In sum, education jogged along in the older perspective.

Things had, however, to move on new lines, and hence fresh thought had to be given to educational problems, even in that situation. For instance, one of the first significant educational developments was the appointment of the University Education Commission in 1948 under the chairmanship of S. Survapillai Radhakrishnan. (The report was submitted in 1949 and will be dealt with later) Prime Minister Nehru, also realized the importance of education and was anxious to respond to the new situation. A senior respected leader, Abul Kalam Azad, was appointed the Minister of Education at the Centre. Nehru was also keenly aware of the need of radical restructuring of the educational system. In his address to the first Conference of State Education Ministers in 1948 he said:

“Whenever conferences were called to form a plan for education in India, the tendency, as a rule, was to maintain the existing system with slight modifications. This must not happen now. Great changes have taken place in the country and the educational system must also be in keeping with them. The entire basis of education must be revolutionized.”

The following sections will review the actual implementation of this objective during the post 1947 period.

The most significant development for education in the early post 1947 period was the adoption of the Constitution which came into force in 1950. It contained several important provisions bearing on education.

First, all education including that in the universities remained mainly with the States except for certain specified items like

- (a) coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions;
- (b) responsibility for running Central Universities and specified institutions for scientific or technical education and research;
- (c) other specified Union agencies and institutions for professional, vocational or technical training and research, which remained with the Centre; and
- (d) vocational and technical training for labour which was included in the Concurrent list.

Second, the provisions about the official languages of the States and the Union which had a crucial connection with education. The States could adopt as their official language Hindi or any other language of the 14 languages mentioned in the language schedule. The official language of the Union was declared to be Hindi in *Devanagari* script (and international numerals) with a proviso that English will have an *associate* status during

the interim period. This period was to end by 1965 but there was a great setback to the acceptance of Hindi in the later fifties and in the sixties and the interim situation has continued indefinitely and become almost semi-permanent!

Third, the stipulations in the Constitution maintaining some safeguards. They were of two kinds: One set of safeguards was meant to protect the educational and cultural interests of the linguistic and religious minorities. While guaranteeing freedom of religion, it was laid down that "no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution recognized by the State or receiving aid out of State funds", and that no person attending any institution shall be required to participate in any religious instruction. At the same time it recognized the right of religious and linguistic minorities "to establish and administer educational institutions of their own choice" and prohibited the State from discriminating against them in granting aid or recognition. These safeguards have (a) become of doubtful validity as regards enforcing the prohibition of religious instruction which is often given under the name of 'moral' instruction, and (b) proved positive nuisance in implementing commonly accepted educational principles and making managements observe fair rules of administration. This particular clause — as the judicial rulings have demonstrated several times — acts as a stumbling block in many educational reforms like the clause on the right to property in enacting socio-economic reforms, for instance far-reaching agrarian reforms.

The second set of safeguards was for the promotion with special care of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of women, the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). They were strengthened by the recognition of the equality of all citizens irrespective of sex, race, religion, caste, etc., and, also by the abolition of untouchability.

Again, the Constitution directed the States to provide free and compulsory education for all children between 6 and 14 years within a period of ten years, that is, before 1960. Finally, there are many other provisions in the Constitution with regard to the spread of education and equalization of opportunity in education. Thus the Constitution may be considered as an important landmark in the educational history of India.

But before tracing the historical developments in education it is necessary to mention other institutional and organizational aspects relating to education. Although education basically remained a State subject because of the Constitutional provisions and even otherwise, the Centre was now much more deeply interested in educational advance than in the

colonial period. It had now assumed the long-expected role of a co-ordinator and monitor of educational advance and information and also of an initiator of innovative programmes. The Planning Commission also played a significant role both in the overall planning and monitoring of education; it was also a general allocator of resources. The Central Government could now intervene with resources and provide expertise to help remove the educational imbalances between States and also initiate programmes for qualitative improvement. Thus the Ministry of Education at the Centre became an important ministry and the importance that the Central Government attached to educational matters during the earlier period can be seen both from the fact that the Minister for Education usually enjoyed a Cabinet rank and that eminent men were selected to head the Ministry — Abul Kalam Azad, M.C. Chagla, Triguna Sen, V.K.R.V. Rao and others.

In the post-Independence period new organizations were created to develop different sectors of education. The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established as a non-statutory body in 1953 and became a statutory Commission in 1956. The UGC promotes higher education, particularly the universities, to fulfil the Centre's role of coordinating, determining and maintaining standards in education at this level. It has considerably expanded its promotional and innovative activities during the last three decades. Then there is the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) founded in the early sixties for encouraging educational research, training of teachers and teacher-educators, and other allied activities. After its reorganization a decade later the NCERT's activities are mainly confined to school education. The National Staff College for Educational Planners and Administrators (the former Asian Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, established in 1962, in collaboration with the UNESCO) was later renamed as National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). It specializes and runs courses in the planning and administration of education. Then there is the All-India Council for Technical Education and many other bodies, looking after specific sub-sectors. Several States have their own State Institutes of Education (SIE) which offer research and training support to the educational activities in the States.

Assessment of educational plans and the resulting advance and preparation of new educational plans are carried out by: the Planning Commission's division on education, the Ministry of Education at the Centre and the State Departments of Education. The system generates tons of educational information and statistics compiled and (supposed to be) published regularly by the Central Ministry, the UGC and State Departments. Then there are periodically conducted All-India Educational

Surveys, almost every five years, the Fourth Survey was conducted in 1978.

Throughout the post-1947 period there has been almost unceasing effort to deliberate on the problems of education, and to propose measures for its expansion and improvement, and even its total transformation. The more important of them are: (1) the University Education Commission (1948) under the chairmanship of S. Radhakrishnan; (2) The Secondary Education Commission (1952) presided over by S. Lakshmana Swami Mudaliar, (3) The Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari to take a comprehensive review of education in all its aspects, (4) The Report of this Commission led the Central Government to issue the Statement of National Policy on Education (1968) to provide the basis for further development and advance.

There were several other efforts as well: like Committees for Considering School Education (1947-48), Committees for discussing the problems of women's education (late fifties and early sixties), several Committees appointed by the C.A.B.E., and latest in this chain the two Committees appointed in 1978-79 to consider the ten-year school curriculum and the vocationalization at the +2 stage. These were the main Commissions and Committees at the all-India level. Besides them, there were inevitably committees appointed by the State Governments to consider their specific educational problems.

So it cannot be said that there was any dearth of serious, expert thinking on education and its salient issues during this period. Moreover, all the while they are constantly and continuously being discussed and debated with much interest and enthusiasm in public forums — Parliament, state legislatures, conferences, seminars, journals and newspapers, teachers' organizations, and also students' organizations. Education has always been a matter of perennial discussion in India.

Before ending this preliminary account of a few important aspects of educational developments after 1947 two other important events — although somewhat aberrant in the whole picture — should not go without mention. It has been mentioned before that the dominant trend of thought On Centre-State division of education was that education should mainly be a State subject with a certain role of crucial importance for the Centre in the coordination, monitoring, initiation, overall guidance and rectification of imbalances. This was reinforced by the Constitutional provisions. But there was an opposing view as well, that education should be at least a Concurrent subject. Actually this alternative trend gained a sudden im-

petus during the emergency rule (1975-1977) and the Parliament passed an Act declaring education a Concurrent Subject. That this was an act done in undue haste, and was perhaps only politically motivated, is evident from the fact that even after the passing of the Act the administration of the educational system has continued on the same old lines! But the Act still remains on the statute books, but unimplemented in practice.*

Another event of an infructuous nature was the (second) Policy Statement on Education (1979) equally hurriedly taken out by the *Janata* Government then to power. But Soon the *Janata* Government itself folded up within a few months and the Statement lost all effective significance.

The next section will begin the review of the educational advance in India after the transfer of power in 1947. For many similar reviews (of other aspects of Indian developments) a convenient periodization is usually to divide the whole period into three sub-periods: (i) a short interim period from 1947 to 1950-51; (ii) the period from 1950-51 to 1964-1965; and (iii) the post-Nehru period after the mid-sixties. For our purpose the first two periods will be combined and will be called the Nehru period. The educational developments will be studied over either the entire post-1947 period, or when, it is more meaningful, they will be distinguished as belonging to the Nehru period or to the post-Nehru period.

II. Towards National Policy on Education

Undoubtedly there has been considerable expansion of the educational system in the post-Independence period, in the system as a whole and all its stages and specializations. The total number of institutions (excluding adult education classes) rose from about 230,000 in 1950-51 to over 500,000 in 1965-66 and on to near 650,000 in 1980-81. The total enrolment also increased more than four times: a little below 25 million in 1950-51 to about 70 million in 1965-66 and further to more than 110 million in 1980. Inevitably the number of teachers has correspondingly increased from about 0.8 million to 2.1 million in 1965-66 and further to about 3.5 million in 1980. The total expenditure rose from Rs. 1,444 million to Rs. 6,220 million in 1965-66 and to about Rs. 31,100 million in 1980; or (to compensate for inflation) from 1.2 per cent of the NNP (Net National Product) in 1950-51 to 3.0 per cent in 1965-66 and about 3.5 per cent in 1980. It is often said that after China this country has the largest population under education, no doubt, in both cases because of their large populations.

* With the Union Government's decision in 1985-86 to start Model Schools in all the districts, this statement needs to be qualified — Editor

A major cause of this rise in the numbers is of course the growth of population during the three decades. But even so, the pace of growth of education in the post-1947 period has been very much more in these three decades than in the whole span of British rule covering more than a century.

During the three decades enrolment has stepped up by four times at the primary stage, six times at the middle and High School stage and fourteen times at the stage of higher education (with general and professional education including the diploma students taken together).

After noting the general dimensions of the growth of education during the thirty years of Independence one may note some of the salient trends emerging from them. First, enrolment of girls has risen at a much faster pace — the major reason being the much lower base from which it started in 1950-51. Their enrolment increased by almost five times at the primary stage and by ten times at the middle stage during the twenty-five years since 1950-51; and yet the share of girls in the total enrolment at all stages is still quite low. This is clearly brought out by the following short table.

Enrolment in Elementary (Class I to VIII) Education

Year	(in millions)					
	Primary Stage (I to V)			Middle Stage (VI to VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	13.77 (60.6)	5.39 (24.8)	19.16 (43.1)	2.59 (20.6)	0.53 (4.6)	3.12 (12.9)
1965-66	32.18 (96.3)	18.29 (56.5)	50.47 (76.4)	7.69 (44.2)	2.85 (17.0)	10.53 (30.8)
1975-76	40.65 (100.4)	25.01 (68.1)	65.66 (83.8)	10.99 (43.6)	5.03 (23.9)	16.02 (36.7)
1977-78	43.20 (99.3)	26.95 (65.4)	70.15 (82.8)	12.03 (49.7)	5.74 (25.3)	17.77 (37.9)

N.B.: Figures in the brackets are percentages to population in the relevant age-groups.

But the same figures which cover the age-group 6 to 14, for which the Constitution had directed the implementation of universal, compulsory education by 1960, also show that they are much below the intended targets. These two stages, particularly the primary stage and its completion, are of particular importance for literacy. During these thirty years literacy (percentage) has risen from 16.6 in 1951 to 24.0 in 1961, to 29.3 in 1971 (and 36.2 in 1981).

Finally, a general slow-down has set in in the rate of elementary stage enrolment after 1965-66. For instance, the annual growth rate was about

7 per cent between 1950-51 to 1965-66 but it is of the order of 2.5 per cent in the next fifteen years upto 1980. It is true that the growth rate slows down as enrolment percentage in an age-group increases. But this rate of 2.5 per cent is almost the same as the population growth rate. This means that the enrolment percentage to the concerned age-group has stagnated. Actually the figures for 1975 and 1978 show that for the primary age-group (the percentage decreased from 83.8 to 82.8 — a similar regression was also observed for the period 1965 to 1970. Moreover, at the middle stage the enrolment percentage growth also slowed down after 1965, and certainly so after 1975. Evidently this slow-down will have a serious adverse effect on the objective of achieving full literacy. This general slow advance is closely related to the slower advance of education and literacy among the weaker segments of population, *viz.*, women, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and other backward sections; this will be further dealt with later.

A brief review of the spread and growth of the educational system in the post-1947 period was given above. As mentioned earlier there was also considerable churning of ideas in respect of reconstruction of education during this period. This will be briefly indicated here by dealing with three of the many committees and commissions: The University Education Commission (1948-49), the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), and the Education Commission (1964-66).

(i) *The University Education Commission* was appointed immediately after independence, because for a rapid, planned economic — industrial and agricultural — as well as socio-political and cultural development the country required highly qualified manpower at the highest level in science and technology as well as in social sciences and the humanities. This could hardly be expected from the existing system of higher education. The main recommendations of the Commission are summarized below:

(1) A twelve-year school course absorbing the Intermediate stage followed by a three-year degree course. This recommendation was identical with that made by the Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919);

(2) Development of Universities, particularly at the post-graduate stage, as centres of research, that is, the advancement of knowledge, and provision of adequate resources in men (scholars) and resources (funds) for this purpose;

(3) Similar institutional base for the training of higher-level technological and professional personnel;

(4) Strengthening of the Universities and such institutions by the Central Government by ensuring the necessary funds and at the same time full autonomy in their functioning;

(5) Appointment of a University Grants Commission for this purpose;

(6) Improvement of salary-scales and service conditions of the teachers in the Universities and Colleges;

(7) Reform of teaching methods and examinations;

(8) Replacement of English as the medium of instruction by Indian languages and development of Hindi as the federal language, while retaining the connection with English as a library language and also for contact with the growing knowledge in the world; and

(9) Establishment of Rural Universities to meet the need of rural development in agriculture, industry and for their social and cultural advancement.

(II) *The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)*: Secondary Education is a vital link between Primary Education and Higher Education and, for many, a terminal stage to the world of work. In both these respects the inherited legacy of secondary system was extremely unsatisfactory. It was therefore natural that this Commission had to be appointed to follow the University Education Commission. Its principal recommendations were:

(1) The total School Course should be of 11 years' duration which should include the Intermediate State. This should consist of 7 or 8 years of Elementary Course with 4 or 5 years of primary and 3 years of middle (or lower secondary) education followed by 3 years of higher secondary education;

(2) The curriculum for the higher secondary should include (a) three languages — mother tongue, the federal language (Hindi) and English with Hindi replaced by a modern Indian language in Hindi-speaking areas; (b) general science with mathematics and social studies, (c) one craft, and (d) three additional subjects selected from seven groups of subjects;

(3) Multi-purpose schools in the secondary system providing terminal courses in technology, commerce, agriculture, etc;

(4) Improvement in the quality and competence of teachers with ade-

quate salary scales and service conditions to attract better human material for secondary teaching;

(5) Better facilities in terms of libraries, laboratories and other equipment;

(6) Reforms in methods of teaching and assessment; and

(7) Institution of Boards of Secondary Education to control Secondary schools thus removing them from the control of the Universities.

Not many comments will be offered at this stage on the recommendations since their implementation (or non-implementation) would be evident from our review of the educational developments in a later section. But it is *prima facie* clear that the recommendations of the above two Commissions about the duration and division of the entire school courses were in conflict. Consequently, the old system remained in force for the next 15 to 20 years until the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern now in vogue in most of the States, following the National Policy on Education Resolution (1968), was generally accepted. Many of the other important recommendations — except the appointment of the UGC, improvement of service conditions of teachers, adoption of regional languages as media in the school course and the underwriting of most of the educational expenditure by the State — mostly remained on paper. Even these changes were enforced merely because of the extra-educational forces in the general socio-economic and socio-political situations as they developed after 1947.

The most comprehensive thinking on education during the post-Independence period, so far, was that of the Education Commission (1964-66), with its chairman D.S. Kothari and secretary (the late J.P. Naik). Its voluminous report (called ECR hereafter) considered almost every aspect of Indian education. As mentioned by the chief architect of the ECR, (J.P. Naik), it was an attempt to prepare a blueprint of national system of education in India, and a programme of action over the next twenty years (1966-1986). The title of the ECR, *Education and National Development*, in fact indicates its underlying approach which is to link education as the key factor to the desired goals of rapid economic and social development of India. The recommendations of the ECR were directed towards: (A) transformation of the educational system, (B) improvement of quality, and (C) expansion of facilities, that is, quantitative expansion. The recommendations for these three objectives are briefly summarized below.

(A) *Transformation*: For this purpose the ECR proposed: (1) Universalization of elementary education and adult education to liquidate

illiteracy; (2) Work-Experience and Social or National Service as integral parts of education at all stages; (3) Emphasis on science education and research, making the teaching of science and mathematics compulsory in the school stage; (4) Relating education to productivity; (5) A new language policy with regional languages as the media of education at all stages with the study of English as window to the frontiers of knowledge and of Hindi as a link language; (6) Availability of alternative channels of education including part-time and own-time education; (7) The common school system for all students; and (8) A more or less uniform pattern (10 + 2 + 3) with 10 years of schooling, 2 years of higher secondary and a 3-year degree course.

(B) *Qualitative Improvement*: Here the main ECR recommendations were: (1) Raising the quality of teachers in terms of their qualifications, salary scales, security and service conditions; (2) Identification and development of talent from all sections of population; (3) Improvement of teaching and learning materials and methods; (4) Improvement of methods of teaching and examination; (5) Selective development of Schools and Colleges; and (6) Major Universities as centres of excellence

(C) *Expansion of Facilities*: The ECR proposals in this respect were: (1) Universal elementary education of at least seven to eight years, and to bring every child in the age-group to school before 1986; (2) Adult education to liquidate illiteracy by 1986; (3) Expansion of pre-school education; (4) Selective admissions to higher secondary and university level education, and control of numbers in accordance with manpower requirements; (4) Vocational and professional education at every stage; (5) Non-formal education — part-time and own-time education — to be expanded on a very wide scale; and (6) Removal of regional imbalances and facilities for educational advance of the weaker segments — women, the SC, and the ST.

It is interesting to review the follow-up of the ECR. Although the Report was submitted in 1966 it was only after the general elections in 1967 that the Education Minister set up a Committee of Members of Parliament to consider it and provide him with a working draft of the National Policy. The discussion in the Committee mostly centred round the recommendations about the language policy, the 10+2+3 pattern and the neighbourhood school, but identified some 16 programmes for immediate action. The ECR and the Parliamentary Committee's report were placed before the CABE and a special Conference of the Vice-Chancellors. The discussions in the CABE were similar to that in the Parliamentary Committee and the latter mostly discussed the proposals on the medium of instruc-

tion in higher education and the 'major' Universities. They were further discussed in both houses of Parliament and finally the Cabinet issued a Statement on the National policy on Education (SNPE) in 1968.

The SNPE was significant in that it was the first statement on national Educational policy by the Government of Independent India. But it had successfully side-stepped almost everything of importance in the ECR for revamping Indian educational system including even setting up a time-limit to the universalization of elementary education. The SNPE is full of innocuous platitudes based on the ECR recommendations without much will or determination to implement them. A bolder bid made by the Education Minister in Maharashtra State met a similar fate. It was clear that the balance of general socio-political and socio-economic climate in the country was not ready to accept the major changes suggested by the ECR; it was in favour of continuing the *status quo* with such changes which supported the actual social dynamics as it was developing after Independence—its political economy and social structure. To anticipate the actual implementation of the ECR (and its much diluted form the SNPE) which will be covered by the detailed account of educational developments, it may be remembered here that only a few recommendations bolstering the actual situation were implemented, e.g. Regional languages as media in some branches of higher education, the 10+2+3 pattern, improvement in teachers' salaries. The rest were either rejected, ignored or accepted merely nominally—that is with specious good intentions without any vigorous efforts to pursue them.

III. Actual Achievements

We shall now review the actual advance of education in the post-1947 period in its main segments starting with school education or mass education.

Mass Education

Let us first dispose of the pre-school education which, anyway, covers less than 5 per cent of the age-group. Most of it is confined to fee-charging institutions under private management, in urban areas. Their clientele is mostly sections of the upper and middle classes and quality depends on the kind of teachers, equipment, fees and localities. Programmes for extending pre-school education to the poorer classes were started under the auspices of Central Social Welfare Board; but funds were meagre and the enrolment was small—estimated to be about 2 per cent of the eligible children in 1972. There is no reason to suppose that this scheme has made any substantial headway later.

So mass education essentially means the education of the age-group 6 to 14 whom the Constitution had included to enrol in ten years, that is, by 1960—in Primary School (classes I to IV or V) and Middle Schools (class V or VI to VII). The growth of this education has already been exhibited in a table in Section II. The figures show that the objective of universal education has not been accomplished even in 1980 not only for the entire age-group 6 to 14 but even to its vital segment 6 to 11, the Primary School age-group.

The universalization of primary or elementary education involves the fulfilment of three requirements: universal provision of schools, universal enrolment of the age-group, and universal retention of the enrolled children. The first condition is now more or less satisfied, for Primary Schools are at easy walking distance for most of the population. But the provision of Middle School is not yet universal—the general presumption is that for universalization their ratio should be of the order 1:3, it was approximately 1:5 in 1965 and now about 1:4.5 which means a long way to go. (This is also observed in the enrolment ratios given in the above-mentioned table).

So far as enrolment is concerned, it was one in three at the primary stage and one in eleven at the middle stage in 1950-51; it is now approximately two in three and one in three in the respective age-groups. It appears from the trends observed in the above-mentioned table that reaching the intended target of universal enrolment even at the primary stage is going to be extremely difficult in the present system because those not yet enrolled belong to the weakest, most deprived social segments. Incentives on a modest scale, e.g. free supply of books and materials and even mid-day meals are being tried in parts of some states. The results are initially encouraging but do not have a lasting effect. The use of penal provision for enforcing compulsion is wisely avoided because it is not going to work in respect of the large number of marginalized, indigent sections of society. Apart from many other factors, the most important is poverty where parents not only lack motivation but also do not have the minimum wherewithal to send the children to school—and after a certain age find them useful, almost indispensable, for additional gainful work and help at home.

The third requirement of universal retention is equally, or perhaps more, difficult to realize, and for the same reasons. The enrolled children begin to drop out in the deprived areas almost from the year of their enrolment, that is, from class I itself. The drop-out and failure rates are extremely high. There was some improvement in the initial post-Independence period but for the last fifteen years the drop-out pattern is almost the same.

Of every 100 children enrolling in class I only about 40 reach class V—that is, attain good enough literacy—and 25 complete class VII. The others drop out, the biggest loss of almost 30 to 35 taking place in class I itself. This means that the apparently impressive school enrolment becomes in fact a phony enrolment in respect of their stay in school and achieving literacy. Thus almost half the oncoming generation enters life illiterate or semi-literate. The reasons for this tremendous school wastage are basically almost identical with those for non-enrolment. In addition there are social—e.g. early marriage in the case of girls, and educational—e.g. poor quality of schools and teaching—reasons also.

Talking about literacy one must ask what happened to the Constitutional Directive to make every adult between 15 and 40 literate by 1960. Actually this programme did not take off to any appreciable extent until 1977-78. It is true that some States like Maharashtra and West Bengal did initiate literacy programmes with some enthusiasm in the fifties. In some districts of Maharashtra, for instance, the programme named *Grama Shikshan Mohim* (Campaign for educating the village) achieved some success and was celebrated with public fanfare. But soon the target-achievement became phony and the 'Campaign' just petered out. Once again it assumed its slow-motion character.

Two developments in adult education, however, need to be mentioned:

(a) Social education which takes the acquisition of literacy further by linking and following it with wider educational effort covering citizenship, vocational training and cultural enrichment.

(b) At the University level there are programmes of 'continuing education' of the level of higher education, but they were both on such a modest scale that their overall impact was and, is inconsiderable—not a very flattering record.

Before ending the discussion of the sorry plight of adult education one should deal with the sudden spurt which it apparently took in 1977-78 after the assumption of power by the *Janata* Government. The educational policy-makers and planners advocated a two-pronged attack on adult illiteracy by adopting Non-Formal Education and the National Adult Educational Programme (NAEP). Since the first did not emerge out of the experimental stage only the NAEP will be briefly considered here.

The sponsors of the NAEP, it is fair to say, did see that this massive adult illiteracy is closely linked with the acute socio-economic oppression

and deprivation of the common people, that the two battles will have to be fought simultaneously, that this would need a country-wide people's movement. So they formulated their objectives and methodology with a liberal mixture of radical phraseology like 'awareness', 'social liberation', 'conscientization' of the new educational thought *a la* Paulo Freire. The total plan was quite impressive: a target of ten crores of adults between 15 and 35 years to be made literate, by gradual expansion of the programme over a period of five to six years, starting from Gandhi's birth anniversary in October 1978. It was financially underwritten in the Sixth Plan with a modest (initial) instalment of Rs. 200 crores. The NAEP, it was recognized, has to be accompanied by an earnest pursuit of the universalization of elementary, at least primary, education.

Some persons, like the present author, had pointed out the conceptual weaknesses and organizational hurdles, even in the gestative stage. It was pointed out that the necessary people's movement cannot be ordered, that it can arise and gain momentum only by the logic of the socio-economic and socio-political situation, and that the fight for literacy may or may not be an integral part of this essentially—a fight for social transformation in the first instance. The sponsors were warned that in the absence of large-scale committed voluntary efforts the NAEP would become inevitably bureaucratized and would fail.

The programme, after some preliminary experimentation, started with great fanfare in October 1978. But within a year the *Janata* government collapsed and by the beginning of 1980 was replaced by the Congress(I) Government. And like everything else initiated by the former government this programme was also cold-shouldered; it was not exactly closed down but kept on without much enthusiasm. But irrespective of this political upset, the performance of the NAEP, if one critically scans the official and non-official reviews of its functioning in the period of eighteen months, makes a sad reading. While the NAEP started with adequate enthusiasm and systematic endeavour, allowing dedicated voluntary agencies to take it up and showed commendable progress, it soon flagged. The voluntary agencies were eased out, the attendance fell rapidly, the grand radical objectives were soon folded up, and even in terms of the acquisition of the three R's hardly 25 to 30 per cent of the initial enrolment—which again was about one-third the target aimed at—became literate.

The new Government perhaps realized later that neglect of NAEP did not redound to its credit, went through formal motions of continuing it, at least maintaining some part of its infrastructure. But the stipulated period of 5 odd years is nearing its end and no systematic official assessment is yet

made public. So one does not know the total cost incurred, the benefit — the number of literates — realized, and/or the lessons drawn from this yet another aborted effort.

Thus the two arms of the literacy policy — expansion of primary education and adult education — have failed in their objective even after three decades. This is clearly shown by the literacy percentage figures from the Census for the period: 1951, 16.6; 1961, 24.0; 1971, 29.8; 1981, 36.2. In the meanwhile because the growth rate of literates is slower than the population growth rate India has the largest and a growing number of illiterates in the world!

Other developments in Elementary Education during this period will now be briefly reviewed. Improvement has taken place in the quality of teachers in the sense that the proportion of trained teachers has increased and the new recruits are mostly the SSC certificate holders, a few even with college education. Curricula and text-books have also undergone commendable changes; the latter are now brighter in appearance, elegant in style and more modern in content although in the more recent years many of them betray national and regional chauvinism, and religious revivalism extolling in a deliberate exaggerated manner the 'virtues' of mythical and historical heroes.

The management of Elementary Schools — excepting the small number of privately managed schools — is in the hands of local bodies, municipalities in the urban areas and of the Zilla Panchayats in the rural areas. This is a part of the decentralization of powers to local authorities, education being perhaps the most important of the ZP activities. The finances are of course provided by the State Governments. This is in line with the administration at this level in the pre-Independence period under the Dyarchy and was put under some necessary curbs of the Department during the period of Provincial Autonomy. Now the curbs are few, non-existent or non-operative.

Decentralization of Elementary Education is sound in principle if it is run with initiative and efficacy; it can meet the local needs more effectively and exercise a healthy control more vigilantly. The main gain under the ZP and municipal administration was the rapid expansion of schools, even in remote areas and serving neglected communities. Here local patriotism, pressures exercised by political and other influential community leaders, genuine interest in the spread of education, and even the desire to provide jobs for the large number of SSC leavers, etc., have combined to bring about rapid expansion of schools.

At the same time the ZP administration has also fostered many negative features: poor performance, and blatant nepotism, favouritism, petty corruption and other malpractices, particularly in the appointments, transfers and placement of teachers. A number of reviews of ZP administration have pointedly recorded these unpleasant, unethical features. It is often noticed that a number of ZP members do not hesitate to use the teachers for their political ends including electioneering purposes. The poor performance — tremendous wastage and drop-outs — of elementary schools can often be traced to these questionable practices. This is particularly true of single-teacher schools, which are almost one-third of the rural schools, where the teachers favoured by the non-official elements in the ZPs can play truant or be regularly absent for days together. Although it is not easy to suggest really effective measures to check these untoward features it is undoubtedly necessary to devise them for better functioning retaining the local initiative.

Finally, it is necessary to consider Basic Education; another reform intended at the elementary stage. Its genesis originating from Gandhi, modifications by his followers stressing its productive activity, ignoring the self-financing principle insisted by Gandhi and its experimental implementation during the pre-War (World War II) and post-War years by the Congress ministries in the pre-1947 period, have been reviewed in the earlier chapter. In the post-1947 period there was initially considerable enthusiasm about adopting and expanding Basic Education. The UP in fact tried to convert all its Primary Schools as Basic Schools just by an administrative fiat. Other States tried to implement it with the necessary preparations involved in the reform — training of teachers, choice of crafts, equipping schools, etc. What happened was in fact the dichotomy — a small number of Basic schools and the majority of non-basic ordinary schools, where the former became unpopular both in urban and rural areas. A further dilation called education with 'orientation to basic education', introduced in 1956 also failed in its purpose. The difficulties were not only its acceptability — because Basic Education was considered inferior and meant for 'inferior' segments of people — but also due to other factors, e.g. non-availability of (land for agriculture and) materials for the teaching of crafts and also its expensiveness if it was to be seriously pursued. In the result a curtain was drawn on Basic Education in the early sixties.

Indian educational thought, however, whether as a homage to the 'father of the nation', or following the trend in the world educational thought, incorporated the two principles: (a) importance of productive activity in education, and (b) the desirability of relating school curriculum to the work and life of the community. Not only did the Education Commission emphasize them but every subsequent schema of school education

lends them due recognition, at least with lip-sympathy if not in its actual implementation. This is to be seen from its inclusion in its new *avatars* of 'work-experience' and 'socially useful productive work'. Needless to say their enforcement in practice is very poor.

Secondary Education

Secondary education has a strategic position in the whole schema of education for several reasons; First, secondary education lays the foundation of all higher education. Second, it should be the terminal stage for many who, after well-directed additional training have to fill the middle-level working positions — technical, vocational and professional. For instance, successful secondary school leavers should be, and perhaps even now become, primary teachers, a sector of crucial importance for good mass education. In spite of this situational importance secondary education has always been and still remains the weakest link in the chain. This neglect can only be explained by the fact that it has not the aura of mass education, that is, primary education, nor has it the elitist educational prestige and support of the higher education, nor the imperatives of technical education. And yet, for getting even a modest job or vocation the SSC is a must which explains the large influx into Secondary Schools.

It was because of its strategic, linking character that the Secondary Education Commission was appointed immediately after the University Education Commission. Its recommendations for restructuring and improvement have already been stated where it was pointed out that many of its worthwhile recommendations remained neglected because of the conflict between the educational patterns suggested by these two Commissions.

Let us first consider the ambiguity of the nomenclature and the question of pattern or structure. Secondary education, in the old colonial system, either started with vernacular standards V (or VI) to VII (or VIII) or with Anglo-vernacular standards V (or VI) to the SSC or the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations. The High School classes had also this kind of ambiguity. So long as one is aware of these different nomenclatures used in different contexts their alternative use should not cause confusion. But for understanding the significance of the uniform 10+2+3 pattern suggested by the ECR one has to remember two essential differences. Some States had inherited that pattern — 10 years of schooling till the SSC, followed by two years of Intermediate course, topped by two more years of the degree course. Others had 11 years of schooling till the SSC, instead of 10. This meant that the total period upto

graduation was either 14 or 15 years, the former being the norm in most States in North India. In some States there was the variation of the HSC where the student spent one or two more years in High School, passed the HSC which qualified him for skipping one year of the 2 + 2 year course in College for a degree in liberal education (in arts, science or commerce). The three basic questions were therefore: (a) the *status quo* of the total duration of 14 or 15 years for a degree course, (b) relegating the two-year Intermediate Course or one year of it in the school as Higher Secondary, and (c) adoption of a 3-year Degree Course. It should be worth stating here that most of the secondary pupils passed through the SSC channel and not the HSC one — the figures of the outturn for 1975-76 were SSC: 1.48 million, HSC: 0.34 million, approximately. It was these varied structures in different parts of India which the ECR wanted to replace by their recommendation of the new famous 10 + 2 + 3 pattern which was approved by the Statement of National Policy on Education in 1968. According to the authors of the ECR the proposed uniformity was just one and relatively minor part of it, the real substance being the course content and its upgrading, which may be very well accepted.

How has the proposed structure been accepted and implemented by the States? This question can be very briefly answered as: "the uniformity principle is accepted but the protagonists of 14-years' and 15-years' duration still stick to their guns".

There were some substantial difficulties in the implementations of this pattern, about the contents. The revised curriculum consisted of three languages — mother tongue, English and Hindi or an alternative modern Indian language, the famous three-language formula — together with mathematics and science, as compulsory or core subjects and some more on an optional basis. It also stiffened the + 2 or the Higher Secondary Course, and strongly recommended vocationalization for a large number of students at the + 2 stage to give it a terminal character. Each one of them became controversial: the three-language principle raised the great language controversy, and took on in the South a virulent anti-Hindi posture, which remains still unresolved; the stiffening of the SSC and the HSC courses resulted in stiffer examination results which greatly affected the weaker segments of population; and the vocationalization has not made a real beginning both because of lack of wherewithals to make them really terminal courses and the doubtful job opportunities for its product. While the Ishwarbhai Patel Committee (1979) has tried to meet the grievance about the stiffening of course content by diluting them considerably, the Adiseshiah Committee has made some plausible-looking recommendations for the implementation of the vocationalization

complement of the + 2 stage. The first has somewhat eased the situation, but it remains to be seen how far the second set of recommendations (of the Adiseshiah Committee) can be put effectively into practice.

In spite of the defects in secondary education both High Schools (classes VIII onwards) and Middle Schools, and enrolments in them rapidly increased. The number of High Schools rose from about 7,000 in 1950-51 to 43,000 in 1965-66 and to 48,000 in 1980-81, respectively six times and seven times. Middle Schools went up from 13,000 in 1950-51 to 75,000 in 1965-66 and on to 118,000 in 1980-81, respectively six times and nine times. Enrolment in High/Higher Secondary was about 1.5 million, in 1960-65 it increased by four times to over 6.1 million, and by six times in 1980-81 to about 9 million. That in middle School was about 3.3 million in 1950-51, which rose three-and-a-half times in 1965-66 and to 19.0 million, that is, by six times in 1980-81. While at the beginning of the post-1947 period one out of every 13 of the boys of the relevant age-group and one in 50 girls were enrolled, now more than one-third of the boys and one-eighth of the girls are in High Schools. This is indeed a phenomenal expansion, particularly in comparison with primary education. Correspondingly the number of teachers also increased almost in the same proportion.

There were several factors for this very large increase. This is partly due to the rise in enrolments in primary and elementary which created a social demand and local social pressures for Secondary and High School education and further, as we shall see, for higher education in Colleges and Universities. Due to these pressures which were mainly socio-political, State Governments had to adopt liberal grant-in-aid policies towards High Schools which were mainly under private management, closely connected with the local-level political leadership which had arisen from the middle-caste middle-class social strata in small towns and big villages. Moreover the same pressures induced many State Governments to make the Secondary education free or nearly free from the sixties. It is true, this liberal 'democratizing' policy adopted by the 'democratic' leadership often resulted in unnecessary proliferation with dilution of standards due to provision of meagre and miserable facilities, and stinking malpractices of the managements. On the other hand the managements could claim that they were bringing education at this level to the doorstep of students — particularly from the weaker sections, girls, the SC/ST and agricultural labourers.

It need not be repeated that the medium of instruction is regional language, a change which had mostly come about before 1947, although a growing elitist section in towns and the countryside is patronizing English-

medium schools for their children right from pre-school education. And this has also acquired an appreciable political and governmental prestige.

Despite this large expansion of Secondary and High School/(and now Higher Secondary) education there is no decisive transformation towards diversification and vocationalization so as to make it a terminal or near-terminal stage for middle-level jobs and vocations. It is true that such facilities have greatly increased — training of elementary school teachers, polytechnics, industrial training institutes, secretarial and commercial schools, and training for para-medical or development-oriented personnel. But all these facilities can absorb about 9 per cent of Secondary and Higher Secondary students, the same proportion as before. So the intended big thrust has not come about.

What about the qualitative improvement? The teachers' qualifications as well as training has improved and salary scales and service conditions have also improved. But pay-rise gets soon wiped out by price-rise; moreover, maintenance of fair service conditions in schools are subject to the sweet will of their private managements which are often exploitative and resorts to malpractices like under-payment and other harassments.

The post-Independence period has witnessed some improvement in curricula and text books and in the method of teaching and examination, particularly in the better-type Secondary Schools. But in other respect — equipment, extra-curricular facilities, vocational guidance, etc. — there is hardly any qualitative advance, the main hurdle being inadequate finances; but it must be conceded that the motivation of the teachers is also not high.

Higher Education

We have observed earlier the great significance the Government of India attached to higher education including advanced teaching and research and appointed the University Education Commission as early as 1948. Its voluminous report contained a large number of recommendations with a view to revamp the whole higher education. Unfortunately its recommendation of the new educational pattern was almost the same as recommended by the Educational Commission of the mid-sixties. In the meanwhile the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) had suggested a different pattern! Its other recommendation about expansion and raising of quality were only pursued in parts, and as we shall see in this section, not exactly in the manner suggested.

The implementation of the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern, discussed in the last section, need not be repeated. Let us therefore start with the expansion and the augmentation of the system.

In 1950-51 there were 27 Universities which increased to 64 in 1965-66 and to 108 in 1980-81; research institutions from 18 through 39 to 50; Colleges of general education from about 500 through 1,675 to about 4,000; and those of professional education from 200 through 2,775 to 3,500 approximately. Enrolments also increased very rapidly: post-graduate enrolment from 16.5 thousand in 1950-51 to 71.8 thousand in 1965 and reached 200 thousand in 1975; enrolment of graduate students 86.7 thousand through 626 thousand to 1,900 thousand — by about seven-and-a-half times in the first 15 years and by three times in the next 15 years, and about 22 times in the thirty-year period. The total enrolment in higher education increased by four times, from 326 thousand in 1950-51 to 1,331 thousand in 1965 and in the next 15 years by more than three times to 4,131 thousand, that is, by almost 13 times during the thirty-year period. All this is a tremendous increase affirming the popular demand for higher education, and particularly for general degree education. This extraordinarily steep growth of higher education is due to reasons similar to that of secondary education: the pressing social demand due to the large turnout of SSC holders and socio-political pressures due to democratization of politics making a bid for 'democratization' of higher education; the resulting policy of unrestricted admissions, particularly in general degree education — arts, science and commerce; liberalization of grants-in-aid and minimum conditions for opening new Colleges in the mofussil and fee concessions to a large number of economically backward class (EBC) students; the inability of Secondary (or Higher Secondary) education to assume a terminal character, thus propelling the SSC holder automatically to higher education; and the last but not the least the extreme dearth of an adequate number of attractive avenues of remunerative employment after the SSC. Consequently the nexus between the degree and a reasonably paid white-collar job continues in spite of its frequent denunciation.

To look at the situation in the right perspective it should be mentioned that the proportion of enrolment in higher education in India to its population is still quite low when compared to most advanced countries and even to some developing countries. But paradoxically the ratio of the College freshers to SSC leavers is quite high — more than 50 per cent in 1975 in general higher education. Clearly this enrolment has no relation to the various manpower requirements, nor is the content of secondary or higher education relevant to job requirements. Unlike the advanced countries those who join the general liberal degree courses almost nears 90 per cent. To conclude this discussion about enrolment it may be instructive to see the outturn at different levels and specializations. Unfortunately we have only figures for 1975-76 with us. They are: SSC 1.48 million, HSC 0.34

million, BA/B.Sc. 0.36 million, MA/M.Sc. 92 thousand, Agriculture 5 thousand, Education 62 thousand, Engineering and Technology 13 thousand, Law 24 thousand and Medicine 14 thousand. (During the five years upto 1980-81 there must have been substantial increase in these figures.) This record may be rounded off by giving the 1971 Census figures of the stock position, which was — with all its limitations — SSC holders 17.2 million and graduates 3.5 million. Although 'guess-estimates' are always hazardous, one should not be surprised if the 1981 Census figures of stock are of the order of 35 and 7 millions respectively.

The above-mentioned expansion and growth has taken place mostly in the old educational framework inherited from the colonial regime and continued with some (minor) modifications necessitated by the changed socio-economic and socio-political situation. At the same time following Nehru's foresight and bold initiative, an altogether new advance was registered in the advanced teaching of and research in science and technology on modern lines. It was Nehru who, as in many other things in post-1947 India, was responsible for laying down a national science policy for India, which was announced in the Scientific Policy Resolution (1958) of the Government of India. This policy later resulted in the establishment of National Council of Science and Technology, Department of Science and Technology, and Committee on Science and Technology. Soon after Independence Nehru founded the Department of Atomic Energy, himself holding its ministerial charge. A chain of National Laboratories and All-India Institutes in different areas were established working under the overall care of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The Government of India also established several top-grade institutions — the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the Indian Institutes of Managements (IIMs) and Agricultural Universities taking Indian advanced higher education into a new era. One should note, however, that most of them were started with liberal aid — financial, equipmental, academic expertise and also ideology(!) — mostly from the Western capitalist countries. Inevitably their work, outlook and product very often carry the general impress of similar institutions in the USA and other countries in the West. They also very often act as outposts of their educational, cultural and ideological influence.

There was a large development of research facilities — in fact most of these facilities are a creation of post-Independence period when new post-graduate departments were started in a number of universities and the few old ones were expanded and strengthened. The post-1947 period also saw the growth of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Bombay and of the Delhi University as prestigious institutions of international renown and

the establishment of the Jawaharlal Nehru University as a centre of excellence has added a third such institution. There are several old and new organizations to promote and consolidate research work in special branches like Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Historical Research, and the latest of them, Indian Council of Social Science Research. Thus after two decades or so of the Independence, India can claim to rank as a country having the third largest number of scientists.

It was mentioned before the idea of a UGC for India came up first during the pre-1947 (British) period and it was one of the important recommendations of the University Education Commission (1948-49). The Central Government moved in the matter in 1953 by establishing as a non-statutory body (and later gave it a statutory status in 1956) to discharge the Centre's constitutional role of the coordination and maintenance of standards in higher education. From a modest budget of a few millions of rupees it has considerably increased and ramified its activities during the last twenty-five years with a consequent growth in its budget to hundreds of millions of rupees (of the order of Rs. 900 million in 1980). The UGC played an important role in the qualitative improvement in higher education, mainly in the universities, but later it extended the scope of its work of colleges as well. The growth of university research departments, and new activities like Advance Centres, Summer Institutes are all due to its far-sightedness and liberal financial assistance. Its latest enterprise is to pursue the Education Commission's recommendation of having selected Colleges as autonomous institutions; but as yet it has not shown progress except in Tamil Nadu. Due to this growth of facilities and provision of junior and senior fellowships — through the UGC and otherwise — the number of post-graduate research students has increased substantially, more than ten times, during the post-Independence period.

A review of higher education will remain incomplete without dealing with the question of medium of instruction. It would perhaps be helpful to outline here a synoptic view of the total educational system in this respect. In elementary — primary and middle level or vernacular lower Secondary Education — regional languages were media of instruction from the early years of the British rule. At the High School level — English Middle Schools and Upper Secondary — regional languages were introduced more and more as media of instruction and examinations from the late twenties and the process was complete by 1947. But English still remained the only medium in all Colleges and Universities — with solitary exceptions.

The situation started changing in favour of regional languages at this level as well after Independence. But this transition in Higher Education —

unlike that in Secondary Education in the earlier decades — has taken place, not through a planned policy and programme but because of the far-reaching change in the socio-political situation. The sheer force of numbers — of students from the urban and rural areas belonging to the middle and lower strata who have completed their education with only a casual knowledge of the English language — knocking at the doors of higher education has necessitated this transition. Substantial changes have occurred in this respect during this post-1947 period, particularly after mid-fifties. But since they had to be accepted more because of popular pressures from outside and below, without well thought-out plans and programmes the present situation cannot be said to be conducive to improvement of quality.

The broad contours of the change that has taken place are as follows: In the humanities and social sciences (including commerce), most of the students at the undergraduate stage, except in some metropolitan centres, learn and are examined in the media of Indian languages. But in science and mathematics most students still use English. In the technical and professional degree courses (e.g. engineering and medicine) English prevails as the medium. The situation at the post-graduate stage in general education is mixed — in the humanities and social sciences substantial numbers of students are now using Indian languages. So far as research degrees are concerned most of the theses are still written in English except those concerning Indian languages and literature and exceptionally in regional history.

The most significant stumbling block in this change-over from English is the acute paucity of good text-books—the present texts are just translations, sometimes inaccurate and misunderstood, of corresponding matter in English or 'Anglo-Indian' texts—and more of the ancillary material which is mostly in English in most disciplines. Unless a systematic, herculean, top grade effort is put in by our first-rate scholars in this respect the quality of our university product is bound to remain low. Of course one should remember at the same time that side by side with these 'vernacularized' college and university students there exists an entire segment—small but growing—of students who are learning in the English medium right from pre-school education through High Schools to College and University stages. This issue including its significance in our educational and cultural situation will be taken up again later.

Other important developments will now be briefly mentioned. The UGC took the initiative in the modernization and reform of curricula and examination system, and by now many Universities have devised new curricula and some have modified their examination procedures. Other pro-

grammes include introduction of external degrees and correspondence courses, preparation of scientific terminology in Hindi and other Indian languages, publication of standard text-books and/or translations in Indian languages, strengthening of libraries, aid for construction of hostels and welfare facilities and introduction of the National Social Service Scheme. Perhaps the most important reform which was promoted by the UGC in response to recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) and the Education Commission (1964-65) was a substantial increase of the salary scales of University teachers, particularly after 1970.

In the end must be mentioned the serious problem of the runaway growth of students and expansion of Colleges (particularly of general education) which cater to them. While this proliferation has no doubt brought college education to the doorstep of urban and rural students, the education that they offer is very often substandard because of the recruitment of sub-standard, jaded teachers and lack of every kind of facilities—at least tolerably suitable buildings, adequate equipment, libraries and laboratories. Nearly all these Colleges are under private management some of which have members who are often uneducated, uncouth, overbearing and with hardly any idea or understanding about higher learning. Consequently they have become almost politico-educational fiefdoms which have become cesspools of corruption, nepotism and other malpractices extending from management norms to conduct of examinations. It is anybody's guess how the situation could be remedied in the existing socio-political and politico-economic conditions.

IV. Towards Educational Equality

In this section we shall follow the educational advance of the weaker sections of society during the post-Independence period. Since these efforts were directed essentially towards equalization of educational opportunity the problem of regional and other imbalances will also be included. In fact the section starts with general social-structural inequalities and regional inequalities.

General Inequality

The salient features of educational inequalities in the Indian situation in the post-1947 period can be easily observed in the table on literacy percentages classified by sex, rural-urban differences, and separate figures for the SC and ST. No comments are necessary except:

- (i) figures for Maharashtra are also given to show how the inequalities are no less glaring even in a State which is relatively more advanced in education;

- (ii) complete break-up is not yet available for the 1981 Census; and
- (iii) it is left to the reader to consider how far these inequalities are getting reduced over the years. Lest the reader skips over it because the relevant figures are not given, both for want of space and lack of reliable statistics, it should be stated that the most backward sections in education are women in the rural areas belonging to the SC/ST.

It should be possible with a more detailed effort to support these inequalities by giving enrolment ratios for the same classifications at various stages of education. But it is beyond the scope of a brief review like this. (This can be left to a specialist. But some idea can be had from some of the figures presented while dealing with women and the SC/ST in later pages in this section).

Regional Imbalances

It is well known that there are serious imbalances in the educational development of different States and also between regions within the same State. To illustrate the first a table is reproduced giving literacy figures for 1971 and enrolment ratios at the primary and middle stages for 1977-78. This is given for the larger 17 States. No attempt is made to update the table because it needs more effort and our idea is only to illustrate the uneven development. It is clear that the whole belt including Bihar, UP, Rajasthan, MP, Jammu & Kashmir and AP are relatively very backward. They contain an overwhelmingly large part of the Indian population besides being what may be described as the heartland of India. But the enrolment ratios for some of these States do offer hope for the future.

For illustrating sub-regional imbalances we shall consider the State of Maharashtra for which we have percentage figures for enrolment at different stages of education for the year 1950-51, 1965-66 and 1978-79, for the three distinct regions: Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and Marathwada. They are of some interest both because they reflect the actual realization towards closing the gaps and also exhibit the situation before and after unification of these regions in 1956 and the formation of a separate State of all these Marathi-speaking peoples in 1960.

The following table is prepared on the basis of the available information on the share of the three regions in the enrolments at different stages of education in 1950-51 and 1965-66. And the second table gives similar information for 1978-79. Together they bring out quite clearly the regional inequalities by comparing the enrolment percentages to the shares in the

STATEWISE FIGURES RELATING TO EDUCATION

	Literacy (1971)			Enrolment ratios in classes I-V (1977-78)			Enrolment ratios in classes VI-VIII (1977-78)			Budget expen- diture 1977-78 (in million Rs)	Percentage to total budget 1977-78	Per capita expenditure in Rs. (1977-78)
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
Andhra Pradesh	33.3	15.7	24.6	83.1	59.8	71.7	34.5	16.8	25.8	1790	25.7	37
Assam	37.7	18.9	28.8	81.3	58.8	70.3	42.6	24.8	34.1	524	24.8	28
Bihar	30.6	8.5	19.8	93.7	39.3	67.3	39.9	13.4	27.1	1296	27.7	20
Gujarat	46.2	24.6	35.7	112.3	77.7	95.5	53.6	31.3	42.8	1388	28.4	45
Haryana	37.2	14.7	26.7	89.3	46.9	69.1	60.5	21.6	42.4	490	20.5	42
Himachal Pradesh	42.3	20.0	31.3	117.3	77.4	96.9	76.9	30.8	53.6	278	27.2	57
Jammu and Kashmir	26.4	9.1	18.3	81.6	43.1	62.0	55.8	22.8	39.5	265	15.9	48
Kerala	66.5	53.9	60.2	108.9	105.2	107.1	91.9	83.1	87.6	1666	38.7	68
Madhya Pradesh	32.8	10.8	22.1	79.9	39.9	60.6	39.1	14.3	27.2	1429	20.1	29
Maharashtra	51.3	26.0	39.1	116.3	88.5	102.7	57.5	32.2	45.0	2649	21.7	50
Mysore	41.9	20.8	31.5	96.5	76.1	86.6	49.2	28.5	39.0	483	26.0	44
Orissa	38.4	13.8	26.1	101.2	60.3	81.2	35.0	16.0	25.7	783	21.4	31
Punjab	40.1	25.8	33.4	117.2	104.0	110.9	65.2	44.4	55.5	924	26.4	61
Rajasthan	28.4	8.3	18.8	80.0	27.4	54.7	40.4	10.6	26.3	1073	24.2	35
Tamil Nadu	51.7	26.9	39.4	114.8	98.2	106.7	61.1	37.7	49.6	1549	24.0	34
Uttar Pradesh	31.8	10.2	21.6	110.4	70.4	91.2	52.2	18.4	36.4	2837	27.0	28
West Bengal	42.8	22.1	33.1	103.7	63.3	83.7	43.7	21.8	32.8	1530	22.4	29
India	39.5	18.4	29.3	99.3	65.4	82.8	49.7	25.3	37.9	—	24.5	37

Source: (i) Literacy figures from 1971 Census.

(ii) All other figures from Selected Educational Statistics 1977-78, Ministry of Education, New Delhi

population which are approximately 61, 23 and 16 per cent respectively for Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and Marathwada. The ranking in relative educational advance demonstrates the leading position of Western Maharashtra, followed by Vidarbha, and Marathwada is the most backward. The underlying factors of industrial and economic advance, urbanization and their erstwhile political past—Western Maharashtra, a part of Bombay Presidency; Vidarbha belonging to the Central Provinces having partly a *zamindari* structure; and Marathwada being a part of the feudal Princely State of Nizam—are closely related to these differences as seen from the figures of 1950-51. After their unification and following a deliberate policy of equalization, one can see its results in the figures for 1965-66 and more so in those for 1978-79. It is quite clear however that the gaps are still there, particularly in the case of Marathwada which is still educationally lagging much behind, and also for both Vidarbha and Marathwada in respect of higher stages of education. But one can also see which way the winds of change are blowing.

Similar glaring—even more glaring—educational backwardness can be shown to persist among the sub-regions of other States, as for instance the Eastern and Himalayan parts of UP, the Southern part of Bihar and the Telengana region of AP, etc. It is true that the socio-economic, structural differences, different political legacies and traditions, the population structure, etc., have contributed to these education unevennesses. But it is also clear that the three decades of Independence have not been able to close the gaps, not even to mitigate them substantially. A districtwise analysis and grouping has been attempted by some eminent scholars but we have not come across systematic analysis of educational inequalities.

**Enrolment by Stages in three regions in Maharashtra
(Percentages to the state Totals)**

Category	Western Maharashtra		Vidharbha		Marathwada	
	1950-51	1965-66	1950-51	1965-66	1950-51	1965-66
STAGES						
Pre-Primary	86%	70%	14%	26%	0%	4%
Primary (I-IV)	78%	66%	16%	21%	6%	13%
Middle (V-VII)	77%	66%	15%	21%	8%	12%
Lower Secondary (VIII-X)	78%	68%	15%	22%	7%	10%
Upper Secondary (XI-XII)	77%	84%	17%	6%	6%	10%
Total General School Education	78%	67%	16%	21%	6%	12%
Higher Education	79%	76%	19%	18%	1%	6%
Professional Schools	91%	48%	5%	40%	3%	12%
Special Schools (Including Social Education)	60%	79%	39%	10%	1%	11%
Total	76%	68%	18%	20%	6%	12%

Percentage of Enrolment at Different Levels – 1978-79

	Western Maharashtra	Vidarbha	Marathwada
Population (1971)			
Classes I-V	60.9	23.1	16.0
Classes VI-VIII	65.0	22.1	12.8
Classes IX-X	68.6	21.3	10.1
Classes XI-XII	68.7	21.8	9.5
Higher education	70.9	20.3	8.9
(Arts, Science, Commerce)	74.3	15.5	10.1

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The Transfer of Power in 1947, and the Constitution of 1950 changed to a very large extent the context of educational and other social advance of the SC/ST. Not only the right of equality, non-discrimination, abolition of untouchability were underwritten by the Constitution but it also directed the States to promote their educational and economic interests. Accordingly a number of special benefits, incentives, etc., were devised. Readers will recall that the British colonial government had also started some of them on a very modest scale. After Independence they became vastly greater in scope, coverage and variety.

These 'concessions' have recently become a bone of acrimonious debate, but let us make the point straightaway that they were not meant to be doles or concessions but in the nature of special rights and privileges, measures in compensatory justice in recognition of the age-old economic oppression and social suppression and discrimination.

Briefly stated the benefits are: (i) free supply of textbooks and stationery, (ii) free uniform to children in government-approved hostels and *Ashram Shala* (for the tribals), in some cases also to day-scholars, (iii) free education at all stages; (iv) pre-matric scholarships to selected students, (v) post-matric scholarships (of the Central Government) to all SC/ST scholars for higher education subject to limitations of family income, number of scholars in the family and failure(s), (vi) hostel facilities in the backward class hostels, (vii) special coaching classes for those preparing for State and Central services examinations, and (viii) reservations in admission to certain specific courses like engineering, medicine, etc. (and also in government and semi-government services) in proportion of population subject to minimum qualification. (The manner in which they are actually implemented will be briefly commented upon later). These special benefits were supposed to last upto 1960 in the first instance, but have been renewed every ten years; the latest renewal was in 1980, for

Enrolment of the SC/ST at Various Stages of Education (Figures in thousands)

		1965-66			1975-76			1977-78		
		B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
Primary Stage	SC	4178	1761 (42)	5939	5418	2523 (47)	7941	6233	3101 (50)	9334
	ST	1743	661 (38)	2404	2388	1079 (45)	3467	2446	1236 (51)	3682
Middle Stage	SC	783	196 (25)	979	1074	339 (32)	1413	1298	449 (35)	1747
	ST	231	59 (26)	290	340	122 (37)	462	424	150 (35)	574
High/Higher Secondary Stage	SC	332	65 (20)	397	524	131 (25)	655	775	168 (22)	943
	ST	83	18 (22)	101	155	51 (33)	206	172	54 (31)	226

Note: (i) The source for 1977-78 is Ministry of Education publication, *Selected Educational Statistics 1977-78*; For 1965-66, 1975-76 the figures are extracted from J.P. Naik's collection of Tables on educational statistics.

(ii) The bracketed figures are the number of girls per 100 boys enrolled.

another ten years. These facilities have undoubtedly helped the SC/ST (and other backward classes eligible for them) tremendously.

We shall first review the educational advance made by the SC/ST in the post-'47 period. From this review the very low literacy of the SC/ST segments, its very slow progress over the three decades, and also near-illiteracy of their women are quite evident. The great rural-urban gap is shown by the following figures for India extracted from the 1971 Census.

Literacy 1971 Classified by Rural-Urban, Sex and SC/ST Classification

	<i>All Population</i>			<i>Scheduled Castes</i>			<i>Scheduled Tribes</i>		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	29.3	39.5	18.4	14.4	22.2	6.0	11.1	17.4	4.8
Rural	23.3	33.1	12.9	12.5	19.8	4.8	10.5	16.7	4.3
Urban	52.0	61.0	41.5	28.3	39.1	16.0	28.4	37.0	19.1

No comments are necessary

The following table describes: (i) the educational enrolment of the SC/ST at different levels of education for the years 1965-66, 1975-76, 1977-78. (Reliable figures for the earlier bench-mark year 1950-51 are not available). (ii) SC/ST coverage in primary and middle education in 1977-78 compared to all population.

The table shows that there is a greater expansion at the Secondary and Higher stages. But the increase in enrolment at the Primary Stage in the decade 1965-66 to 1975-76 is not much greater than the growth-rate of population indicating a stalemate.

Coverage in Primary and Middle Education 1977-78

	<i>Classes I to V (age-group 6-11)</i>			<i>Classes VI to VIII (age-group 11-14)</i>		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
All Population	82.8	99.3	65.4	37.9	49.7	25.3
Scheduled Castes	75.5	98.4	51.4	25.5	36.8	13.5
Scheduled Tribes	66.1	90.1	42.1	17.7	25.9	9.3

The above table shows that at the primary level the SC/ST boys are not far behind the total population but the girls suffer from a considerable

lag. Moreover the enrolment coverage of the age-group decreases much more rapidly for the SC/ST. Another set of figures (not given here for saving space) shows the usual situation of most backward social segments that the higher one goes their share in enrolment decreases very rapidly (relative to their share in the population).

The reason for this steep pyramid is the much higher wastage among the SC/ST students at all educational levels. For instance out of every 100 SC students joining class I only 27 per cent reach class V and only 13 reach class VIII. Among the ST students the corresponding numbers are of the order of 20 and 10 respectively. No comments are necessary except to say that: (i) this explains the extremely slow pace of literacy, (ii) the drop-out rates for girls are even higher, and (iii) in the case of the ST the *Ashram Shalas* show an appreciably better performance (of course if they are better managed!).

The reasons for low enrolment and high fall-out are: dire poverty, socio-economic deprivation, lack of motivation. As one eminent social worker among the Warlis put it: "Literacy is a tall talk. A hungry man refuses to digest anything but food." Besides these there are other hurdles. In spite of the proclamation of equality, abolition of untouchability, the SC children have still to face overt and covert discrimination. In the case of the ST children there is the language hurdle—the medium of instruction even in the lowest classes is not the local tribal language but the standard regional language; and often the teachers are non-tribal with no sympathy or empathy with the tribal cultural environment. Besides the curricula, their content as expressed in books, school timings and vacations, etc., are out of tune with the surround and the tribal life-cycle.

Undoubtedly the institution of *Ashram Shalas* for the ST and hostels for the SC/ST have helped in their educational progress: in 1975-76 there were about 1,200 *Ashram Shalas* and 7,000 hostels with more than 330 thousand inmates. This is certainly a commendable effort and yet one must not ignore the many malpractices besetting their management.

Besides these plus and minus points of the policies and programmes for the advancement of the education of the SC/ST one must admit that they have not all been a success story. The performance of the SC/ST students often falls short of expectations. For instance several senior reserved posts in the government are not filled for lack of suitable candidates. This points towards their initial handicap which is not only poverty but also its concomitant, the cultural impoverishment in the family and the community. It seems the various incentive programmes have to include sympathetic individual attention and a friendly guiding hand to mitigate this lacuna—for this, of course, some thought and practice is necessary.

The post-matric scholarship programme is perhaps the most successful programme. As mentioned before it started before Independence; it had a few hundred scholars in the fifties and in 1975-76 it covered about 282 thousand SC and 55 thousand ST scholars—a remarkably large increase indeed. Although it has some obvious shortcomings this single programme together with reservations in professional and vocational institutions and later in the services has given rise to sizable, influential, urbanized elites among these two segments of population, and their articulate leadership. It is true that in this process these elites get alienated from their own this... people separation is understandable. At the same time the raw experience of the past and the discrimination and illtreatment—often real, and at times imagined—which they have to face in the present have produced radical thought and organizations amongst them.

Any review of education for the post-independence period, particularly in the case of the SC, will have to include the sterling contribution of Dr. Ambedkar in this respect. Not only was Ambedkar a political leader of his people but he greatly impressed on them to take to education. As a framer of the Constitution he was responsible for including all those provisions and directives for promoting the educational advance of the SC, the ST and other weaker sections. In Maharashtra he started a number of colleges in Bombay and Marathwada, they raised a whole new generation of the educated SC who are a powerful force in the politics and culture of Maharashtra State. Although shortly before his death he embraced Buddhism and led most of his community and followers to the neo-Buddhist fold the younger generation of both Hindu and Buddhist SC take inspiration from his political ideas, his writings and his insistence on their taking to education.

It is useful to observe the other trends in the educational situation of the SC/ST in the post-Independence period. As in the general educational advance the progress of the SC/ST education is also extremely uneven in different States and also within regions in a State. For instance Bihar, Rajasthan, MP, UP and AP are the most backward in SC education when compared to Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu which are advanced. In the education of the ST Rajasthan, AP and MP lag much behind compared to Gujarat, Assam and the NEF States. In Maharashtra itself the Marathwada districts of Parbhani, Bhir and Nanded are much more backward in SC education than others. Bihar, a middle range State in ST literacy, shows very wide variations.

Among the different Scheduled Castes, and also among different Tribes one finds very wide variations in education. For instance, in Maharashtra the Mahars, Chamars and neo-Buddhists are in the

vanguard while the Mangs are much more backward. In Gujarat 95 per cent of the post-SSC scholarship holders belong to the six castes: Vankar, Chamar, Mahyavanshi, Rohit, Garoda and Bhangi; and 85 per cent of the ST scholars to four tribes: Dhodia, Chaudhari, Bhils and Gavit. Bihar shows similar wide variations with four SC and five tribes predominating. In some of the areas (e.g. in Bihar and the NEF States) some of the STs are very much more advanced due to the long-standing work of the Christian missionaries.

Another trend to be considered is the rise of the new elites both among the SC and the ST due to their educational advance, thanks to the special benefit and reservation schemes, leading to economic advance. They are likely to profit much more than others by the existing educational and service preferences—this is happening, for instance, in the general society—and it may be necessary to plan measures so that the advantages of these special benefits are not monopolized only by their elites.

Before we say something about the future perspective it is necessary to take serious note of two significant trends: First, the special programmes—particularly the post-SSC facilities—have produced a large number of SSC holders and graduates who find it difficult to get employment in spite of reservations. In the next few years, if it is not on us already, the situation will soon develop strains, since the SC/ST have no property base and have therefore hardly any self-employment or private-sector opportunities to speak of. Their only haven is the reservation in the government and semi-government jobs. Second, due to the slowing down of the economy, the non-SC/ST educated are also facing the same predicament. And the most aggressive and selfish amongst them are looking for an opportunity to do away with reservations. Here the relatively deprived segments amongst them also join them because the SC/ST are their immediate competitors. In short the situation is heading towards a point—the precursors of which were the Marathwada riots against the SC in 1979 and later similar atrocities in Gujarat—where there will be brutal local offensives to scrap these schemes, and the leadership at the Centre may take a lukewarm attitude. This is a trend with explosive possibilities and unless the social activists and social thinkers among both the SC/ST and among the other deprived segments of the larger, non-SC/ST, society do some serious mind-searching to find a common approach the only beneficiaries of the bloody turmoils which will ensue will be the vested interests in the towns and rural areas.

Women's Education

Like in all other sectors, Independence brought about a rapid and substantial advance in women's education when compared to the colonial

period. The following short table shows this expansion both in absolute terms as well as relatively to men.

Enrolment of Girls and Women, 1950-51 and 1977-78

Year	Primary (I to V)	Middle School (VI to VIII)	High School (IX to XI/XII)	Higher Education (General)
1950-51	5,385(39)	534(20)	161(15)	40(14)
1977-78	26,953(62)	5,736(48)	2,496(39)*	959(31)*

Note: Figures are in thousands: those in parentheses are the number of girls for every 100 boys enrolled.

Source: *Selected Educational Statistics 1977-78*, Ministry of Education. Starred figures from J.P. Naik's collection for the year 1975-76.

And yet it lags much behind that of men. The progress is not very satisfactory also in another sense. Referring to the table in Section II the enrolment ratio of girls in 1977-78 in classes I to V is only 65 per cent. Allowing for average and under-age girls about 40 per cent of the girls were not in school. Moreover going to the next age-group and classes VI to VIII the ratio drops to 25 per cent, and further in the age-group 14-17, it becomes as low as one in seven when compared to one in three for boys. (Actual statistics not reproduced here.) No comments are necessary.

The drop-out rate for girls is also much higher. At the Primary stage only 30 per cent of the enrolment in class I reaches class V and almost half of the drop-out occurs in this class itself. The female literacy consequently crawls even more slowly than male literacy. From 7.9 per cent in 1951 it inched to 18.4 in 1971 and to 24.9 in 1981 while male literacy went up from 24.9 through 39.5 to 46.7 respectively in the same years.

It appears from 1977-78 figures, however, that women have advanced relative to men much better in higher education. Taking enrolled women per 100 men the figure is 37 at the undergraduate level and even better, 42, at the post-graduate level. Their favourite fields, again quoting the same index, are arts (61), science (28), medicine (29) and education (70).

In view of the appreciable lag in women's education during the first decade of Independence (1947-1957) relative of the objectives and expectations the Government appointed the National Committee on Women's Education led by Durgabai Deshmukh. It submitted its report in 1959 and recommended special efforts for the growth of female education, and in particular, establishment of separate institutions wherever necessary, and a greater recruitment of women teachers in co-educational schools.

Exclusive schools or colleges are not always a blessing, particularly those in remote areas and with small strength. They do not attract good women teachers, sometimes any women teachers at all, and their small size makes them less viable both financially and qualitatively. Following Deshmukh Committee's recommendations many separate institutions were started and they did serve their purpose and yet, as is natural the large majority of girls and young women have to join co-educational institutions. The number of women teachers did increase substantially; in 1977-78 more than one-fourth of their total strength of 2.8 million teachers were women.

One index of the advance of women's education is the total annual outturn of matriculates (SSC holders) and graduates amongst them. The former has increased by more than fifteen times to 0.45 million from 1950-51 to 1975-76 and the latter (graduates) by thirty times from a mere five thousand to over 150 thousand in the same period. The stock position now (1980) is roughly of the order of 25.0 million women SSC holders and 6.0 million graduates.

Much thought has also been given to women's education during the post-1947 period. The Durgabai Deshmukh Committee is already mentioned; following its recommendation a National Council for Women's Education was established. Then there was the Committee on the Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls (1964). The more comprehensive effort in this field was that of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1971); its report released in 1974 has discussed at length the state and problems of women's education.

Having reviewed the actual advance of women's education in post-1947 period it is pertinent to have a critical look at it. First, primary education and literacy. Let alone the Constitutional directive of bringing all children between 6 and 14 to school by 1960, the system has not been able to enrol more than 60 per cent even of girls between 6 and 11 by 1980. One-third of the enrolled drop out in class I and only 30 per cent reach class IV or V. This means only a quarter of the younger female generation enters life with (nominal) literacy, with the result the number of adult female illiterates is piling up—from 18.5 crores in 1961 to 21.5 crores in 1971 to about 26 crores in 1981, because there has been almost no effective effort in adult education.

Moreover, the spread of girls' primary education and women's literacy is extremely uneven by states, regions, districts and the backward sections of society have the lowest literacy. Female literacy was less than 5 per cent in 1971 in 83 out of 352 districts in India—most of them in Bihar, UP, MP,

Thus girls who continue education in High Schools and Colleges mainly belong to the urban middle and upper classes together with a few from the top and upper strata in rural areas. This 'selection' explains why the enrolment percentage of girls takes a big dip at the Secondary level and does not drop down precipitously afterwards. In fact the growth rates in girls' enrolment have been significantly larger during the last 15-20 years. What is the motivation, particularly in higher education? It is dominated by many factors: desire for learning and career, insurance for a possible mishap, an economic necessity to have a white-collar job for many middle and lower-middle class families, etc. But perhaps for the majority of them it serves a 'waiting room' function, bridging the social space and time between adolescent girlhood and wedded womanhood. And for a few coming from the deprived section it is a dire necessity to lift themselves up from the socio-economic mire engulfing them for generations together.

Before ending this discussion on women's education during the post-1947 period it is necessary to raise (two important issues concerning its future: First, the Constitution and many of the Committees on this subject have championed complete equality between the sexes for getting the education they desire—in other words choice from common curricula. But we should always remember that dissenting voices still persist and stoutly main factor is poverty—lack of food and clothing and the need of girls to look after the household if the woman is working; and poor women must always work, whether in the cities or in the villages. The distribution of education of girls is now not greatly influenced by social norms; it is now 'modernized', that is, it follows the socio-economic assets and status.

What then are the current problems of women's education? In many rural areas social inhibitions against girls' education still persist, qualified women teachers are not available in adequate numbers, usual problems of single-teacher schools, and the problem of accommodation and physical insecurity in the case of unmarried women teachers. The main reason for non-enrolment and large drop-outs is "the poverty of the people and the (need for) domestic and occupational help rendered by the girls..." in the poor households.

At the end of the Primary education, these difficulties are compounded with reluctance to send adolescent girls to co-educational classes at longer distances, preference for the education of sons over that of daughters, the greater usefulness of older girls both for household chores and occupational assistance, and finally, the much greater expenses for the marriage of the more educated girls! Thus there is a big drop in enrolment at the Middle and Secondary stages.

Rajasthan and Orissa, a vast continuous stretch in area and population, where all types of social, economic, agrarian and cultural backwardness cluster together. There are blocks which female schooling has scarcely touched.

The rural-urban and social imbalance, and sex difference are well illustrated by the following piece of table extracted from the 1971 Census.

Literacy in India 1971

	All Population		Scheduled Castes		Scheduled Tribes	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	39.5	18.4	22.2	6.0	17.4	4.8
Rural	33.1	12.9	19.8	4.8	16.7	4.3
Urban	61.0	41.5	39.1	16.0	37.0	19.1

The present backwardness of female schooling and literacy can be undoubtedly attributed in a large measure to the colonial neglect before 1947. It is also true that strong social prejudices also operated in the past. But during the present period they are rapidly breaking down and now the defend this right which Indian women have gained. Second, the expansion and growth of women's education after the promising start during first two decades of Independence, appears to have slowed down during the seventies. This of course is a part of the similar general slow down in education and socio-economic advance during the period after the mid-sixties. But in the case of women who have been neglected in education for generations together this is altogether an unhappy augury and the stalwarts of the cause of women's education have to take timely measures to prevent the setback.

Muslims

If one scans educational writings of the post '47 period one hardly finds any serious writings on the Muslim education in India, based on factual information. The general view—which we do not share—is that after conceding Partition Muslim education needs no special consideration beyond the Constitutional rights in this respect as a religious or (where necessary, because of Urdu) linguistic minority and special concessions given to a small part of them as backward class communities (e.g. Tam-bolis in Maharashtra). In the post-1947 India, Muslim is not a strong minority forming almost a quarter of the population; yet it is the largest minority constituting 11 per cent of the population. Moreover, the State need not

and should not shower on them educational (and other) privileges as was done by the British rulers mostly to serve their colonial interests. It has to pay serious attention to their educational predicament and grievances of discrimination wherever they have a real basis. Unfortunately, in its wisdom the Indian Government have stopped giving all statistical and other informations classified by religion. Its absence boomerangs in giving room to all sorts of allegations, many of them perhaps more imaginary than real.

Let us state straightaway there are no reliable estimates of Muslim advance (or retrogression) in education for the last three decades. Whatever one comes across are small segmental findings, all of which in a way suggest the Muslims as a whole are educationally more backward than other religious segments — not only the Hindu majority but even the Sikhs, Christians and Jains. But it must be remembered that like the Hindus the Muslims are also socio-economically a highly stratified society and has even caste-like formations. It is absurd to lump them all together. Our own view from village surveys in Maharashtra (and elsewhere) is that its educational performance and literacy are of the order of their position in the social hierarchy, parallel to that of the majority community in the region. For instance in rural Maharashtra our inference is that in this respect the Muslims correspond socially to a position somewhere between the land-owning dominant Maratha community and the upper stratum of artisans. In other regions it may be quite different—where the majority are agricultural labour their educational status will indeed be very low.

It has been observed in the last chapter that in most provinces of British Colonial India the *total* Muslim enrolment was commensurate to their then share in the population, but as one went up the educational ladder the numbers declined steeply, sometimes even precipitously. We must add to this the educational trauma suffered after Partition when large numbers of the educated migrated to Pakistan leaving a void in the Muslim middle class. Some Muslim scholars maintain that a new educated middle class is taking shape in the community during the last two decades. It is hoped this is true because this is the way in which the educational regeneration should occur.

It is the impression of thoughtful scholars that a similar situation still prevails although they suspect that even the total enrolment is well below their present share in the population. It is also felt the Muslim children—many of them—still suffer as of old from the burden of learning an entirely unfamiliar language like Arabic to master the prayer book by rote, without understanding. The Muslim elite sections certainly do well as all other elite sections do. But on the whole they have certain grievances which have to be seriously considered: the general, unnecessary in many respects, Hindu bias in teaching text-books, syllabi and teachers;

discrimination in the allocation of jobs both in private and government sectors; and the legitimate encouragement to Urdu wherever there are sizable chunks of Urdu-speakers in the population. Their sentimental bias for the script is not ununderstandable.

At the same time the enlightened Muslim leadership must emphasize the necessity of mastering the regional languages (which are actually their mother tongues in most regions), and the imperative before all depressed minorities to extricate themselves from the overbearing influences of the religious reaction and join hands with the similarly handicapped people in other communities—particularly the majority community—in the struggle for social emancipation of which educational advance is a vital part.

V. Developments in other Dimensions

This section will consider other important educational developments, during the period, which touch many levels and stages.

First, the teachers, one of the most important elements in all education. With the growth of institutions and enrolments their number has also increased considerably. The total number of teachers of all categories were 0.8 million in 1950-51; now, in 1980-81 it is estimated to exceed 3.3 million. A more detailed break-up, available for 1975-76 shows that out of the total of 2.94 million teachers, about 1.25 million were in Primary Schools, 0.78 million in middle Schools, 0.76 million at High School stage and 0.15 million in higher education—Colleges and Universities. One indicator of qualitative progress is that the percentage of trained teachers has increased substantially during these 25 years; 59 to 83 at the primary stage; 53 to 90 at the secondary and 54 to 80 in High Schools. Correspondingly the institutions of teachers' training at the various levels have also increased. One should not, however, be rash to conclude a corresponding increase in the quality of teaching! The progress enumerated above is to be noted mainly as quantitative, and qualitative only in parts.

Another index of progress in respect of teachers—this time from the social standpoint—is the increase in the percentage of women teachers. This has risen from 15 to 21 in the Primary, 15 to 28 in the Secondary, 16 to 25 in High Schools, and from less than 10 to about 20 in higher education during the same period. This advance is indeed remarkable.

The rise in salary-scales at each level as well as its neutralization by further price-rise, and the malpractices in actual payment have already been mentioned.

Second, the expenditure on the educational effort. With the expansion of education the current expenditure has also increased both because of

expansion and inflation. The total expenditure which was estimated to be Rs. 1,444 million in 1950-51 rose to Rs. 6,220 million in 1965-66 and on to Rs. 23,041 million in 1976-77. To allow for inflation if it is considered as percentage of national income it was 1.2 per cent in 1950-51, rose to 3.0 per cent in 1965-66 and the figure for 1977 is estimated to be around the same level. This should be contrasted with the ambitious target of 6 per cent visualized by some optimistic educationists.

It is also interesting to study the shares of the different stages of education. In 1950-51 the share of Primary education was 31.9 per cent and that of Middle 6.7 per cent, of High School 20.2 per cent, and of higher education 15.5 per cent. In 1975-76 however the first decreased to 21.2 per cent, the second, third and fourth rose to 16.2, 23.5 and 23.2 per cent respectively. Thus the expenditure on Primary Education has decreased relatively quite significantly indicating a relative neglect while those on High School and higher education, particularly the latter has risen considerably showing the changed socio-political and socio-economic preferences. Moreover, much of this change had already occurred by 1965-66. The Plan allocation tells the same story for which no figures need be quoted. But another curious trend in the allocation to education in the Plan outlay is worth mentioning. The allocation was 6 to 8 per cent during the first three Plans, reduced to 3.3 per cent in the Fifth and further to 2.8 per cent in the Sixth Plan. One should also remember that in any cut in the plan outlay education (and other social services like health) become the first casualties, and in education the lower stages usually suffer the most.

To study the structure of resources we should first consider the fees. During the post-1947 period Primary education and to a large extent even Middle-level education has become free, except of course in the elitist sector of Private schools. At the Secondary and High School level many States have made it free by subsidizing the economically backward class (EBC) students, applying the income criterion. In some States this has been extended to higher education as well. In the result a larger and larger share of educational expenditure comes from the public exchequer. Fees as a source of income have become relatively less important both in High School and higher education; and a proposal of even a mild rise in fees evokes bitter resentment and agitations among students. Private beneficence was an important source, particularly for infrastructure during the pre-Independence days; now it has reduced considerably.

On the other hand, the State's share in the total expenditure has steadily risen. This was, in a sense inevitable, because of the general view that education has to be largely financed by the State, and in view of the rapid decrease of fee income and private munificence. This leads us to

how this large State contribution is shared between the States and the Centre. Since education is mainly a State subject, it has a substantial charge on the State budget, usually of the order of 25 per cent. During these thirty years the States' share in educational expenditure increased from 57.0 per cent to 78.5 per cent. Putting it differently the States' educational expenditure rose from 15.5 per cent to 26.1 per cent of their budgets. The Central contribution to education is relatively quite small; it shows zigzags from 1.9 per cent of the total Central budget in 1950-51, rising to 6.8 per cent in 1965-66, and declining to 3.1 per cent in 1975-76. If the contributions of the States and the Centre are pooled the public exchequer spent 9.0 per cent of its revenue on education in 1950-51 and 17.0 per cent in 1975-76.

Third, something must be said about the administration and planning of education as it evolved in the post-1947 period. The apportionment of education between the Centre and the States was mentioned at the very outset. At the Centre the most important set-up is the Ministry of Education, together with the UGC, looking after the coordination of the innovative programmes in higher education, and the CABE which, as an advisory body deals with various problems in education and of educational policies. An important function of the Central Ministry, besides fulfilling its statutory obligations, is to monitor and keep track of the educational developments in both Central and State spheres of education. This involves the collection of a large amount of information which is put together by its Bureau of Statistics every year and published periodically. The other organizations (e.g. NCERT, NIEPA, etc.) are concerned with specified areas or aspects (like school education, and educational planning and administration, etc.).

In the States there are Departments of Education which have been considerably expanded and deal with the actual education at various stages, levels and varieties. Further down, the administration of Elementary School education has been largely entrusted with the local authorities—municipalities and Zilla Parishads (or the Panchayati Raj bodies).

As in all other development, educational development also follows a planned approach, formulated in the successive five-year plans. The initiation and finalization in this respect is done by the Planning Commission which has its own Educational Division. Before formulating the next plan for national educational development the Planning Commission reviews the performance in respect of the current plan which is to terminate in due course, and taking this assessment and the overall objectives—general development and educational—into consideration sets up broad targets for the next 10-15 years as well as for the next five years. At the same time every important educational institution or organization is asked to prepare

its own developmental plan and send it to the Central Ministry. The same procedure is also adopted in the States. In this process the Central Ministry, the State Departments and Governments, organizations like the UGC also decide on some new lines of development or modifications in the old programmes and the above-mentioned organizations and institutions take cognizance of these innovations and changes while formulating their Plan programmes. The finalized Central plan and the State Educational Plans go to the Planning Commission which scrutinizes them and puts them together after holding discussions with the concerned organizations—the Central Ministry, State Departments of Education, the UGC, etc. Out of all this deliberative procedure emerges the next five-year plan of education with its different portions specific to different organizations, and the financial implications and allocations for every identifiable, individual sub-sector and also institutions and organizations.

This finalized plan then goes into operation which is by no means a smooth sailing—the common obstacles are the socio-political pressures at the State and local levels, the scarcity of the necessary personnel, the bureaucratic lethargy and lack of initiative to pursue innovative ideas, and above all the shortfall in resources which occurs quite often due to inflation or other factors and in which contingency the axe usually falls first on the proposed educational development. A continuous monitoring and assessment is supposed to be carried out, but it is anybody's guess whether it actually takes place. There is also another source of modification, distortion or altogether non-implementation of a planned programme as it reaches down to the actual area of operation. This takes place while passing through the intermediate stages and organizations, either because of non-understanding of the significance, or under-rating of the objective or a covert opposition or local pressures, either knowingly or unknowingly until the proposed programme becomes changed losing all resemblance to its objective or formulation. But then there are the hazards in all kinds of open or dormant vested interests which have their own views on how the education should function!

Finally, some other development programmes of this period in education may be mentioned: Expansion of agricultural education, technical education, medical education, physical education, education of the handicapped, attempts to streamline and systematically present educational statistics including All-India Educational Surveys, and (infrequent) publications of Year Books of Education. These are not dealt with here in the detail they deserve, because this is after all a short historical account of education after Independence which is meant to cover the more important happenings of educational or social significance.

EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS (1921-22 to 1980-81)

TABLE I

Number of Educational Institutions (by type)

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
1. Universities	14	16	17	27	64	101	108
2. Institutions Deemed to be Universities	—	—	—	—	—8	—9	—10
3. Institutions of National Importance	—	—	—	—	8	9	11
4. Research Institutions	—	—	—	18	39	47	50
5. Colleges of General Education	167	272	496	498	1,673	3,667	4,000
6. Colleges of Professional Education	74	75	140	208*	2,775	3,276	3,500
7. Colleges of Lower Education	+	—	—	92**	1,253	1,405	2,000
8. Boards of Examinations	—	6	6	7	28	43	45
9. Schools of General Education							
(1) High/Higher Secondary Education	2,248	3,652	5,297	7,288	27,477	43,054	48,000
(2) Middle Schools	6,739	10,762	12,843	13,596	75,798	1,06,571	1,18,000
(3) Primary Schools	1,60,070	1,97,227	1,72,661	2,09,671	3,91,604	4,54,270	4,90,000
(4) Pre-Primary	—	—	—	303	3,235	5,658	10,500
Sub Total (1) - (4)	1,69,057	2,11,641	1,90,801	2,30,858	4,97,574	6,09,553	6,66,500
10. Schools of Vocational Education	4,021@	6,785@	12,419@	2,339*	2,775	2,496	2,500
11. Schools for Special Education	+	+	+	98**	265	358	400
12. Schools for Lower Education							
(1) Adult Education	+	+	+	48,556	2,17,912	17,774	25,000
(2) Oriental Studies	+	+	+	3,319	2,591	2,764	2,800
(3) Others	+	+	+	848	297	161	180

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
Sub Total ((1) - (3))				52,723	2,20,800	20,699	27,980
Grand Total	1,73,333	2,18,795	2,03,879	2,86,860	7,27,262	6,41,663	7,07,104

* Excludes Undergraduate colleges.

** Includes Institutions of Undergraduate standard.

@ Schools for Technical and Professional Education.

+ Schools classification not available.

Table II

Enrolment by Stages of Instruction, 1921-22 to 1980-81

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
£							
1. Higher Education (General)							
(i) Research				1,190	6,851	13,898	25,000
(ii) Post-graduate	45,175	95,945	1,93,402	16,528	71,821	1,80,257	2,00,000
(iii) Graduate				86,668	6,25,907	14,08,744	19,00,000
(iv) Pre-university						5,54,473	16,00,000
(v) Intermediate				2,21,337	6,23,642	9,50,356	4,00,000
(vi) Under-graduate (Diploma)				N.A.	2,970	5,350	6,000
Total	45,175	95,945	1,93,402	3,25,723	13,31,191	31,13,078	41,31,000

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
£							
£2. Higher Education (Professional)							
(i) Post-graduate/Research					23,180	64,155	70,000
(ii) Graduate	13,662	21,311	44,114		3,28,470	8,14,794	10,00,000
(iii) Undergraduate				N.A.	1,93,968	2,33,500	3,00,000
(iv) Post-graduate (Diploma-Certificate)					5,321	17,929	19,000
(v) Undergraduate							
(vi) (Diploma-Certificate)					1,87,181	3,31,740	4,00,000
Total	13,662	21,311	44,114	90,263	7,38,120	14,62,168	17,89,000
3. School Education (General)							
(i) High/Higher Secondary	2,18,606	4,32,038	8,70,812	14,86,892	61,55,732	95,13,678	90,00,000 [£]
(ii) Middle	4,34,810	11,42,254	20,36,109	33,30,119	1,09,77,213	1,64,85,549	1,90,00,000
(iii) Primary	68,97,233	1,14,65,709	1,41,05,418	1,86,77,641	4,89,12,678	6,31,08,492	7,50,00,000
(iv) Pre-Primary	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	28,309	2,62,073	5,69,296	9,30,000
Total	75,50,649	1,30,40,001	1,70,12,339	2,35,22,961	4,63,07,696	8,96,77,015	10,39,30,000
4. School Education: Vocational	1,32,739	2,76,986	4,98,947	1,90,568	2,93,444	2,24,210	4,00,000
5. Other Education (School & College)	+	+	+	12,63,351	16,61,580	7,79,094	9,00,000

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
6. Special Education (School)	+	+	+	1,49,906	23,149	30,035	35,000
Total	1,32,739	2,76,986	4,98,947	16,03,825	21,78,173	10,33,339	13,35,000
Grand Total	77,42,225	1,34,34,243	1,77,48,802	2,55,42,772	7,05,55,180	9,52,85,550	11,11,85,000

£ Level-wise distribution of Enrolment was not collected in pre-independence period.

+ Included against (4)

+ Include + 2 stage (new scheme of Higher Secondary).

£ Related to old Higher Secondary pattern.

TABLE III

Number of Teachers (by Type of Institutions)

	1921-22 +	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
1. Universities, Deemed Universities, and Institutions of National Importance		N.A.	N.A.	3,085	9,271	18,981	22,000
2. Research Institutions		N.A.	N.A.	251	389	815	1,200
3. College of General Education		N.A.	N.A.	15,312	58,057	1,28,082	1,60,000
4. Colleges of Professional Education		N.A.	N.A.	4,901	53,972	78,954	95,000
5. Colleges of other Education		N.A.	N.A.	904	6,675	8,990	11,000
6. High/Higher Secondary Schools		54,854	87,862	1,26,504	4,79,060	7,58,561	8,80,000

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
7. Middle Schools	N.A.	50,615	72,413	85,496	5,27,754	7,77,928	8,50,000
8. Primary Schools		3,76,315	4,06,123	5,37,918	9,44,377	12,47,553	14,00,000
9. Pre-schools		N.A.	N.A.	866	6,832	9,951	11,000
10. Vocational Schools		N.A.	N.A.	11,598	17,785	15,758	16,000
11. Schools for Special Education		N.A.	N.A.	16,686	28,756	2,758	3,000
12. Schools for other Education		N.A.	N.A.			21,549	25,000
Grand Total	-	-	-	8,03,521	21,32,928	30,69,880	34,74,200

+ N.A. : for 1921-22, as the collection of Teacher's Statistics started from 1926-27 in respect of Primary and Secondary Schools only.

TABLE IV
Expenditure by Heads of Charge, 1921-22 to 1980-81

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Estimated)
1. Universities, Deemed Universities and Institutions of National Importance	7.34	12.60	22.98	49.053	389.500	1,342.637	2000.00
2. Research Institutions	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	6.256	18.234	36.066	50.00
3. Boards of Examinations	—	0.44	0.97	5.338	48.316	203.524	250.00
4. Colleges of General Education	11.04	19.62	43.92	71.714	383.357	1,756.386	2200.00
5. Colleges of Professional Education	5.98	7.79	18.66	42.194	466.547	1,508.334	1900.00
6. Colleges for other Education	+	*	+	2.224	12.128	31.038	48.00

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Provisional)
7. Secondary Schools	48.73	88.15	170.23	230.451	1,376.926	4,935.622	5000.00
8. Middle Schools	£	£	£	76.990	842.827	3,409.672	4000.00
9. Primary Schools	50.90	83.78	184.85	364.843	1,287.230	4,463.148	12000.00
10. Pre-Primary Schools	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1.198	11.377	33.018	40.00
11. Vocational Schools	5.86	4.66	91.10	36.943	76.611	134.252	190.00
12. Schools (Special)	7.84	12.67	25.56	16.086	9.376	29.427	35.00
13. Schools (Other)	+	+	+	7.249	15.484	42.055	47.00
Total (Direct)	137.69	229.71	476.27	910.539	4,937.913	17,925.179	27760.00
Indirect							
14. Direction & Inspection	9.34	11.71	18.24	27.364	148.626	N.A.	N.A.
15. Buildings	19.76	15.28	28.45	99.270	383.753	N.A.	N.A.
16. Hostels*	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	49.076	N.A.	N.A.
17. Scholarships*	3.18	@	@	N.A.	382.555	N.A.	N.A.
18. Miscellaneous	13.78	23.87	53.65	106.648	318.313	N.A.	N.A.
Total (Indirect)	46.06	50.86	100.34	233.282	1,282.323	3,121.851	3340.00
Grand Total	183.75	280.57	576.61	1,143.821	6,220.236	21,407.030	31100.00
19. Percentage to National Income	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1.2	3.0	3.4	3.7

* Included under Miscellaneous.

+ No separate classification was available. @ Included under Miscellaneous.

£ Included under Secondary.

TABLE V
Distribution of Government Expenditure

	1921-22	1936-37	1946-47	1950-51	1965-66	1975-76	1980-81 (Estimated)
1. Universities, Deemed Universities and Institutions of National Importance				19.971	224.584	945.274	1600.00
2. Boards of Examinations				0.234	0.577	14.923	45.00
3. Research Institutions				5.667	16.217	33.820	30.00
4. Colleges of General Education				27.472	154.186	1,078.995	1320.00
5. Colleges of Professional Education				30.082	346.774	1,173.775	1330.00
6. Colleges for other Education				1.088	7.256	20.651	25.00
7. Secondary Schools	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	84.013	781.609	4,278.935	4300.00
8. Middle Schools				39.231	661.850	3,017.892	3480.00
9. Primary Schools				249.114	1,069.735	3,936.580	10800.00
10. Pre-schools				0.311	3.094	11.445	10.00
11. Vocational Schools				27.824	65.008	115.240	135.00
12. Special Schools				13.973	7.604	25.561	28.00
13. Other schools				—	11.145	34.802	40.00
Total (Direct)				498.980	3,355.609	14,687.894	23143.00
14. Indirect							
Direction & Inspection				26.295	146.295	N.A.	N.A.
Buildings				57.558	283.146	N.A.	N.A.
Miscellaneous				69.845	589.468	N.A.	N.A.
Total (Indirect)				153.698	1,018.909	1,835.169	2000.00
Grand Total				662.678	4,374.518	16,523.063	25143.00
Percentage to total Educational Expenditure	49.1	44.1	45.3	57.0	70.3	78.5	82.0

CHAPTER FIVE

Epilogue*

It may be difficult to present a concise view about the likely trends that may develop in the future, regarding the nature of inter-linkages between education and the socio-economic and political frame. Such linkages were witnessed over a long period of sixty years outlined in the above chapters. However, if a synoptic view of these developments has to be presented, which may help developing some ideas about the future trends, then the following broad conclusions can be drawn. Major focus is on the post-Independence developments, which seem to be more relevant.

The first conclusion we may draw from this review and social analysis of educational developments in over thirty years of independence is that the old pre-independence system and structure of education have, by and large, been maintained and continued. There has been no radical break or restructuring in spite of the radical-sounding declarations made by Nehru and others in the early days. The old 'downward filtration theory' propounded by the British imperial rulers more than a hundred years ago still holds good although, inevitably, there have been changes and modifications in its operation. If the actual performance of the last thirty years is set against the national expectations at the time of the transfer of power (detailed at the beginning of this book) it is very clear that except for changes in a few specialized areas at the top and some other marginal changes, brought about mainly by emerging economic, political and social forces, virtually the same outdated system of colonial education is being carried forward, the same outdated structure of education is being continued. There has been no systemic change whatsoever.

The second conclusion that emerges is that while the system carries on in its obsolete fashion, a considerable quantitative expansion—a wider

* Dr A.R.Kamat, did not live, alas, to write the last chapter stating the conclusions of his case study. However, his another work *Education and Social Change in India* dwells more or less on the same theme. The extracts of this study reproduced from the second paragraph onwards here broadly bring out the essential aspects of the argument running through the above four chapters — Editor.

spread of education— has taken place. This has had two main consequences. The positive feature is that education has now reached those social strata which had hitherto remained largely untouched. For instance, school education, even Secondary education, has almost fully covered the middle sections and is now approaching social segments lower down the social pyramid. On the other hand, this expansion has a negative side too. Having taken place in the old framework, it has accentuated the basic contradictions inherent in the system and intensified them. In a largely illiterate society, adult education suffers from neglect and Primary education from extremely inefficient and slow-paced growth. Secondary or High School education, on the other hand, expands at a much faster rate. And providing no useful terminal outlets, whether in education or in the economy, the system merely propels its product toward a liberal College education, that is expanding its realm indiscriminately. About our higher education, Eric Ashby wrote, "At independence, the Indians inherited in their universities (viz. higher education) a massive invalid unable to respond to any simple treatment."¹ In the last thirty years we have succeeded in making the invalid (now Secondary education is added) even more massive and more invalid as well; there seems no cure except equally massive surgery!

The third conclusion is that there has been little qualitative improvement in our education in the post-independence period; and that little is to be seen only at the top in the IITs, the IIMs, and at the fringe like other high-level educational institutions of training and research. At the other end, and this includes the majority of our higher educational institutions, we see the miserable spectacle of institutions of higher learning which are higher only in name. We have many arts and commerce colleges whose libraries comprise only a few hundred books and that too of the standard, often low-quality, textbook variety; science colleges with extremely ill-equipped laboratories, and both staffed with ill-paid, low-qualified and often maltreated teaching faculty. It is a surprisingly depressing fact of our educational situation that, until a few years ago, in some parts of the country there were agricultural colleges without farms, engineering colleges without workshops and medical colleges without sizable hospitals to speak of.² True, these were perhaps isolated instances but the very fact that they existed—and there are grounds to suppose that they still exist—speaks volumes for the maintenance of standards. What is perhaps more pertinent is that barring the few at the summit, the average standard of the product of our Secondary and higher educational systems has not improved in the post-independence period and, in fact, in the opinion of many academics, has deteriorated. It appears that the elitist educational structure is for the real use of those sections of society and for those sectors (e.g. modern economy) that count, and as for the mass of commoners,

the sub-standard should satisfy their aspirations. The same dichotomy is evident in urban and rural areas.

That this malaise is general and all-pervading is clear enough from the large number of drop-outs (or push-outs) at every level of education. The large wastage at the elementary level has already been pointed out. The situation is no better at the High School and college levels either, as can be seen from the large number of failures at the SSC, HSC and University examinations. Years ago, we had estimated that only about 40 per cent of the arts entrants and 50 per cent of the science entrants of a prestigious college in Pune could obtain the first degree.³ Admittedly, examination standards have been diluted over the last two decades by regular and non-so-regular processes, and yet there is reason to believe that, on the average, the percentage of passes has further decreased in most SSC Boards and Universities.⁴

The fourth conclusion about post-independence educational developments is that, except in the highly specialized but numerically insignificant sectors, the character and content of most of our education is largely lacking in social relevance, relevance to our economy and/or to the current ethos and problems of our society. The education of the pre-independence period rightly attracted the unvaried criticism that it was largely bookish and liberal-literacy and without social relevance right from Primary level through Secondary to College education. This state of affairs still persists. There is an amazing hiatus between the world of learning and the world of work. We have not even attempted to bring the two worlds closer and this to the extent that learning and culture have virtually become identical with leisure.⁵

We have failed to relate the contents of our education to our oft-proclaimed social objectives. For instance, can we say that the theory and application of the social sciences like economics, sociology, political science which are taught in our institutes of higher education are at all relevant to the society in which we live? For the central question concerning Indian society today is its rapid socio-economic and socio-political transformation, a radical restructuring of society. If that is accepted, it ought to be central to all our teaching in social science. A scrutiny of our syllabi and our teaching content shows very clearly that they largely bypass this central issue.⁶

What is true of social sciences is equally true of (natural) science and technology. Perhaps it may be argued that science is universal. (Even this is not true because different societies will lay differential emphases on different branches of science according to their social requirements.) But

technology is certainly not universal. It is specific to the socio-economic situation in the country, its natural and human resources, in other words, to the society wherein it is employed.⁷ But this simple yet important fact about technology had been largely ignored over most of the post-independence period. It is only during the last few years that a few of our top scientists and technologists have turned their attention to the question of relevant technology. For instance, it is amazing that in a country like ours scientists did not so far of their own accord vigorously attack the problem of harnessing solar and wind energy.

The fifth, and a most significant conclusion, which should cause concern to everyone connected with Indian education, is the inordinate grip of foreign influence on all our education and, particularly, the top levels. This is very much in evidence not only in the case of the elitist institutions in science, technology and management but is also pervasively present in social Sciences and the humanities. This is well illustrated in Sheilu Sreenivasan's valuable study,⁸ where she considers the problem of foreign aid and know-how in technological education, and the massive influence exerted on it. The major donor in this field is the US which makes no bones about its objectives, viz. "permeation of the whole Indian academic community by American thought, behaviour and general approach to scientific, technological and also politico-economical advancement."⁹ No comments are necessary except to say that it is not, therefore, surprising that a large number of our IIT alumni, almost a quarter of them, and most of them first divisioners, look to that country for jobs.

But this influence and dependence is more insidious and more pervasive because of many more other factors, the most important of which are the continuation of the old colonial system, the dominating influence of English, the language of education, the continued educational connections with the UK and now more so with the USA, the benefits which these strong ties with the West bring to the Indian academic elite, the vested interest of Indian academia in the continuation of English and Western ties vis-a-vis their own people, dependence on the west in matters of curricula, instructional materials, textbooks and ancillary reading, Anglo-Saxon model building in social sciences, 'Land-Grant' colleges and universities of agriculture, foundation monies, book programmes, journals published with US-conducted funds, etc.¹⁰ All this 'assistance' is welcomed with gratitude in our country by our academic circles as bounty at no cost! Little do they realize the other heavy cost, that of abject dependence, which the country is paying out.

Perhaps it is appropriate in this connection to quote from Daniel Patrick Moynihan from his book *A Dangerous Place* (Allied, 1979). He

Finally, the domination of the socio-economic and political elite's interests in Indian education is clearly seen in the persistence and deliberate nurturing of the so-called dual structure in education. Actually the system is not merely dual, it has several hierarchical channels of education.¹³ The top or elitist channel of the system is well known. It serves the children of the top and upper layers of society who join exclusive kindergarten schools and proceed via expensive English-medium primary and secondary schools to select institutions of higher education. This select exclusive education in the English medium later facilitates their entry to the leading positions of power, pelf and prestige in technocracy, industry, business, and in high-level Central Services and Defence Services.⁴ These exclusive schools, viz., the so-called 'public' schools, convent schools, etc., and their enrolment have increased manyfold during the post-independence period.¹⁵ (Its irony lies in the fact that in the original home of 'Public' schools, in England, they have lost much of their old glamour!) There are now schools of this type also in rural areas. For instance, some co-operative sugar factories have started such schools in Maharashtra; there are also, in Maharashtra, schools of this type set up under State auspices in the name of providing quality education. In contrast, the concept of the common school, the neighbourhood school, so strongly advocated by the Education Commission (1964-66) has been conveniently relegated to the dustbin.

The strengthening of this clearly inegalitarian trend is not just due to drift or inertia. The newly-emerged rural leadership at the state level is very well aware of the bountiful harvests that come the way of English-medium schools. From here starts the road that leads to (status, wealth, and power)—if not this generation, at least in the next. Ministers, both Central and State, and politicians who thunder against the existence of public schools, against the continuing dominance of English, and publicly champion the cause of Hindi and Indian languages, make it a point to send their children to exclusive English-medium schools. Many a politician (including high-ranking ministers) declare that public schools serve no useful purpose, in fact, are harmful and need to be abolished, and—in the same breath—plead for allotting at least a proportion of the seats to the pupils from the common stream; this they do without any sense of embarrassment or abashment. It is not, therefore, surprising that the educational establishment had done nothing to close this elitist channel, nor even to reverse the growth trend which is in such blatant contradiction with its own egalitarian protestations about the principle of equal opportunity in education.

There were a few, not very vigorous, efforts in the early post-1947 period, to check this trend in elitist English education, to give the Indian

says, "Mrs. Gandhi had gone to a White House dinner at which Lyndon Johnson presented a proposal to which the Indians had agreed: that the accumulated rupees of the grain deal should be put into an educational trust, presided over by an American executive director to finance higher education in India." (The proposal was later dropped because of adverse Indian public opinion.) But Moynihan is absolutely right when he says that "We had proposed to take charge of and thereafter to pay for their culture." No comments are necessary.

The sixth conclusion is that, in spite of the considerable advance and spread of the Indian educational system, it has not advanced—to any substantial extent—towards achieving equality of educational opportunity, that is our goal of social justice in education. We have already mentioned the unevenness as regards states and geographical regions, also as regards different social strata.¹¹ It has already been noted that altogether about a third of the children of the 6 to 11 age-group just do not join schools and that they mainly belong to the most socially and economically deprived sections of society. Of those who enrol, almost sixty per cent fail to reach the High School stage. More than half of those who somehow manage to persist in the educational stream beyond this stage are left by the wayside before completing the SSC. By and large, this sifting follows closely their position in the social pyramid. After the SSC, a further sieving awaits students of higher education, that is even more exacting than the rigours they have already undergone. Thus those who can finally make it, barring the exceptional few who survive thanks to scholarships or other concessions and their own herculean efforts, mainly belong to the top two deciles of society. The lower down one is on the social pyramid, the slimmer the chances of educational ascent. This may be called the process of social selection operating in education in our society (which may be likened to the law of natural selection in the biological world), or the law of the human jungle which our present-day money-based society essentially is.

It is true that this process of social selection operates, this unequal opportunity in education persists in other unequal societies too, for instance, even in the most developed countries like the UK and the USA. But in our society, poverty, low social and political status, cultural backwardness, all these cluster together more densely than in most other societies. And this makes the selection process in our country even more ruthless, the inequality of educational opportunity even more relentlessly unequal. And this is accentuated by the built-in inequality in the educational system itself. In sum, we are not only nowhere near the introduction of a 'strong' equality in education but are, in fact, miles away from even the 'weak' inequality.¹²

languages their rightful place in the scheme of things. But they were promptly set aside by the judiciary under a relevant clause in the Constitution, the clause which protects the right of minorities to have schools of their choice. This clause has played a role in education similar to the one played by the right of private property in socio-economic legislation, viz., the preservation of entrenched interests against egalitarian measures for furthering social justice.¹⁶

Before ending this chapter, it is perhaps desirable to emphasize the two main thrusts of this discussion. First, we argue that the educational developments in post-1947 India cannot—and should not—be isolated from the general social situation in which they have taken place. They can be better understood in their essence only when they are related to the prevailing socio-economic and socio-political context, because they are subject to the existing social system in which the educational system is operating.

Unfortunately, although this role of the social system in education is well-recognized in social sciences elsewhere in the world, until recently it was ignored by Indian educationists who were busy devising solutions to educational problems almost exclusively in the framework of educational technology, planning and administration, as in the case of Kothari Commission's Report (1964-66). It is only now during the last few years that a few of them have recognized that "the educational system tends to protect and further the interests of the ruling classes with some marginal changes and adjustments which are in the larger self-interest of the ruling classes themselves." Thus education plays its role "to strengthen and perpetuate the *status quo* with some marginal modifications as may be necessitated from time to time..."¹⁷ Even this realization, and the corresponding efforts at educational analysis, however, are still rather weak, halting and equivocal. It was for this reason that a rather detailed social analysis of educational developments was attempted in the earlier pages. The thrust of our argument is that policy decisions in education, together with the accompanying double-think (sometimes wrongly described as absence of policy, lack of political will, drift, etc.) in the final analysis, are influenced by the politico-economic forces operating in our society.

Moreover, expansion and growth have taken place, whether in education or in political economy, within the framework of more or less the same old social structure inherited from the colonial past. Without any radical (let alone revolutionary) structural changes, this growth and expansion in the capitalist framework have intensified the contradictions in their specific spheres, as well as those between them. Often as in the case of educated employment they come into confrontation. Such contradictions

and confrontations cannot be resolved without a resolution of the basic contradictions within the political economy and social structure.

Secondly, the foregoing analysis also raises the question of the vitality of the present educational system. If what we have described, discussed and analysed above correctly reflects the existing situation in education in our country, the only conclusion to which one can arrive at is that the system has lost all its vitality, and is beyond revival.¹⁸ It is a moribund system, approaching its sure, if slow, demise. The ills of the system are by now porceived by some sensitive educational researchers or writers, although not everyone is willing to pronounce this not-so-cheerful final diagnosis.¹⁹ The many ills besetting its various parts are just different symptoms of the general conditions of impairment. This does not mean that no piecemeal efforts (like the 10 + 2 + 3 reshaping, the NAEP, etc.) must be made. But they will serve only as palliatives, and are not likely to succeed in any major way. It may sound paradoxical, but the only salvation of our educational system lies in its replacement, in a revolutionary perspective, by an altogether new one.

What will be the outline, the objective of the new system? And how does it come about? Both questions are difficult to answer. It is, however, relatively easy to attempt an answer to the first. It is our contention that the same objectives which were spelt out for a radical restructuring of education on the eve of independence (mentioned earlier in this book) with appropriate modifications consonant with the times, can be our guiding principles to visualize the educational system of the near future. It is far more difficult to say how the rebirth or the replacement will actually come about. For, the causes of the educational malaise lie elsewhere, not in the educational system, but in the general socio-economic and political system (of which the former is, after all, a sub-system) which is suffering from a similar malaise, and displaying similar breakdowns, similar symptoms of decay, and which too, is crying out for a radical restructuring.²⁰ All that one can say, therefore (and this certainly brings no solace to those who look for or are adept in devising quick remedies) is that educational restructuring will come about only as a part of the general restructuring of Indian society. And how it will take place will depend much on who wields the power after the revolutionary upheaval and how they wield it.

Notes and References

1. *Universities, British, Indian, African*, Weidenfield and Nicholson—London, 1966, p. 139.
2. One recalls that a few years ago the Indian Medical Council refused to recognize the degrees of some medical colleges in a State in North India.
3. A.R. Kamat, *Wastage and Stagnation in College Education*, Gokhale Institute Studies No. 43, Asia, 1963.
4. For instance, the results in MA (Economics) in Poona University for the same years have been of the order of 10 per cent.
5. This is reflected in our educational system where as a student rises up the educational ladder from primary to higher education he can, and does, adopt a more and more leisurely attitude towards books and studies!
6. See, e.g., Nalini Pandit, "Political Content of Commerce Education in the University of Bombay," *Political Content of Education*, Calcutta, 1977, pp. 62-70.
7. See, e.g., Y. Nayudamma, "Developing Science for Development," *Science Today*, Vol. 12 No. 10, April 1978, pp. 44-45.
8. *Foreign Influence on Higher Education in India*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to Bombay University in 1977.
9. Quoted in *Ibid.*, from US AID report of August 26, 1963.
10. Philip G. Alibach calls it the 'Servitude of the Mind' following his work with Gail P. Kelly (ed.) *Colonialism and Education*, David McKay, New York, 1979.
11. The situation as regards women and other weaker sections, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes are specifically discussed in separate chapters.
12. 'Weak' equality assumes all children of (measured) equal ability should have equal opportunity of education. 'Strong' equality implies that since ability is largely acquired, a child can become more or less intelligent (in terms of measured ability) according to the situation of his family, and that therefore every child should have the same social and familial opportunity for acquiring that intelligence. See e.g., John Vaizey, *Education for Tomorrow*, Pelican, 1971.
13. For instance, V.M. Sirsikar in his "Elitism in Education in India," *Political Content of Education*, Socio-Research Publications Centre, Calcutta, 1977, pp. 101-107, speaks of a three-tier system. Others, including the present author, speak of a four-fold hierarchy, a *chaturvarnya* in education, *a la* the four-class hierarchy in government services.
14. Many studies have shown that the major part of admissions to the IITs, IIMs and the prestigious institutions comes from the more affluent and more educated segments; See, e.g., A.D. King, "Elite Education and the Economy: IIT Entrance 1965-70," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 5, No. 35, August 29, 1970, pp. 1463-1472 and Baldev R. Sharma, "Professionals in the Making: Their Social Origin," *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, No. 9, February 28, 1976, pp. M5-M10.
15. See A.R. Kamat, "Private Institutions of Education," in *The Educational Situation*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973. Also, Alfred De Souza, *Indian Public School: A Sociological Study*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1974; R.P. Singh, *The Indian Public School*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1972.
16. G.S. Sharma, *Educational and Cultural Rights of the Minorities: A Report*, ICSSR Occasional Monographs, No. 9, 1973, gives a very good account of the use and misuse of the Constitutional provisions in this respect. That the so-called convent-or Mission institutions in this elitist channel are not without blatant malpractices towards their teachers and students can be seen from reports in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW): Vol. 13, No. 38, September 1978, "Plight of Teachers of Private Colleges," pp. 1619-1621; Vol. 14, No. 41, October 13, 1979, "Through Teachers'.

- Eyes," pp. 1707-1708; and Vol. 13, No. 34, August 26, 1978 "This Business of Education," pp. 1462-1463. The last deals with the malpractices in a (Muslim) 'minority' college in Madras.
17. J.P. Naik and Syed Nurullah *Ibid.*, pp. 482-483. Also later writings.
 18. See, e.g., our essays in *The Educational Situation (and Other Essays on Education)*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973; and particularly the essay of the same title written in 1971 and included in it.
 19. See, e.g., Malcolm S. Adiseshiah in his "Opportunity to Face Basic Issues," *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 3, 1977; Also Rais Ahmed in "Hairsplitting by the Privileged," in *ibid.* See also writings of the educational commentator A.S. Abraham, e.g., his "Unrest on the Campus, II, the Roots of the Problem," *Times of India*, August 19, 1977, and others in the same daily.
 20. See our *Essays on Social Change in India*.

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